HENRY FROWDE, M.A.
PUBLISHER TO THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
LONDON, EDINBURGH
NEW YORK AND TORONTO

LONGINUS
ON THE SUBLIME

TRANSLATED BY

A. O. PRICKARD, M.A.
LATE FELLOW OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

WITH INTRODUCTION, APPENDIX, AND INDEX

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INTRODUCTION

In a copy of the first edition of the treatise known since the revival of letters as *Longinus on the Sublime*, which is now in the Library of the British Museum, may be read a few lines, written in Latin, by the great scholar Isaac Casaubon, beginning with the words 'A golden book.' Quite recently Professor Butcher has written of it as an 'essay of unique value and interest.' It is unique, partly, because of its rare intrinsic excellence; which gives it a place among the remains of Greek criticism, only shared by the work of Aristotle, so different from it in every respect, on the Art of Poetry. This high quality is allowed to it by a long series of critics and scholars,—from Addison, who first recommended it to a large public of English readers, to Professor Saintsbury. But we need not appeal to authority; the true test is to read the little work through, and to ask from how many writers, ancient or modern, we could have borne the continuous development of the one theme, 'Be great! live with great minds!'—how we should have felt if the wise and humane Plutarch, or the careful and sound-headed Dionysius of Halicarnassus, had tried to enforce it? Yet no one reads the *Treatise* for the first time without feeling that he has found a literary guide of rare ability to direct, to invigorate, to ennoble his thought. Moreover, it has inspired other critics. Burke had the

older study before him, though he only once directly refers to it, when he wrote his *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, an early work, interesting to us, not only for its strong and dignified style, but also as being a characteristic attempt to base upon principles our judgements on matters of taste and opinion; important also, as having had much to do with the conception by Lessing of the ideas contained in his *Laocoön*. Sir Joshua Reynolds draws from our author many of the precepts laid down in the *Discourses*, and often all but quotes his words. Bishop Lowth applied the teaching of the *Treatise* in his own fresh and vigorous *Lectures on Hebrew Poetry*. It is quoted again and again, with evidently genuine enjoyment, by numbers of English writers in poetry and prose; by none more often, or with livelier appreciation, than by Fielding[1].

Over and above its singular attractiveness and solid worth, there are other considerations which make the *Treatise* unique. It is written in a style which is *sui generis*, often more Latin than Greek, both in rhythm and in conception, yet sometimes neither Latin nor Greek, and always impressed with the strong personality of the writer. The interest in authors and books, other than Greek, is unusual, but must have appeared also in the work of Caecilius upon the same subject, to which it is, in effect, an answer. The

[1] See an article in the *Quarterly Review* of October, 1900, which the reader should consult (or Prof. Churton Collins' *Studies in Poetry and Criticism*, 1906).

range from which its abundant metaphors are drawn is both wide and remarkable. Lastly, its strange literary history appeals strongly to our curiosity. It has reached us through a copy written in the tenth century, itself so mutilated in various parts that about a third of the original contents is wanting, without a single word of earlier comment or notice vouchsafed to us by antiquity—a babe cast up by the stern waters of Time, without father or mother or any credentials of origin, but of features which assure us certainly that it comes of noble line.

Questions of date and authorship meet us at the outset, and we will at once try to see clearly how they lie. In a sense, it is possible to make too much of such uncertainties. Any ancient critical work coming from an author who had the great Greek books in his hands, just as we have, only in a more complete form, and who read them in the language of his own daily life and from a Greek point of view, has that about it which no modern estimate can supply; a century or two earlier or later is no great matter. On the other hand, the general conditions of thought and of modes of expression may change very greatly within such an interval. Moreover, we naturally speak of a book, and use it, with much greater confidence when we know all about it—who wrote it, and when, and with what purpose—than when these are all unknown quantities. Take such a writer as Horace, one whose personal circumstances we know so familiarly, and whose judgement worked so evenly, that he may be trusted to say

the same thing under the same conditions at almost any period of his life. Yet we feel on much firmer ground when we are considering the contents, say, of the First Book of *Epistles*, than if we turn to the Second Book or to the *Ars Poetica*, where so many preliminary doubts must be settled or left by agreement *sub iudice*, before we are free to deal with the contents. So the critical student enters upon *Hamlet* or *Coriolanus* with a mind steadier and less preoccupied than he brings to the study of, say, *The Tempest* or *Romeo and Juliet*.

The facts are briefly these. In the old manuscript already mentioned, the treatise is headed in Greek words: *Of Dionysius Longinus concerning Sublimity*. This was reproduced in the earliest editions printed in the middle of the sixteenth century, and it seems never to have been doubted that the author was the same person as Cassius Longinus, a great teacher of philosophy and language in the third century A. D., who was adviser to Queen Zenobia of Palmyra, and paid with his life for his share in her unfortunate rising against Aurelian (Gibbon, chap. xi). Early in the nineteenth century it came to be known, in the first place by a discovery made by an Italian scholar, Amati, in the Vatican Library, that the title was variously given; that the old tenth-century Paris copy itself, though it bore the name of Dionysius Longinus above the text, yet contained an index in which the treatise was ascribed to 'Dionysius *or* Longinus.' A copy at Florence, dating from the fifteenth century, is headed simply *Of Longinus on Sublimity of Language*, and has, on a slip of parch-

ment affixed to the cover, words both of Greek and Latin, ascribing the work to an 'anonymous' or 'uncertain author.'

As no syllable of information has reached us from any source earlier than the old manuscript itself, it seems reasonable, unless a presumption can be established in favour of any one of these traditions, to conclude that all are so many hypotheses or guesses, excepting that one which leaves the author uncertain. So a certain work attributed to Aristotle, but certainly not his, was also attributed, in ancient times, to Plato, another to Theophrastus. The difficulty long felt as to the combination of the Greek and Roman names 'Dionysius-Longinus' may not be insuperable; but, when the names are those of two of the best-known critics of antiquity, it is much to ask us to believe that they were ever borne in real life by one man.

The further hypothesis which grew up, not suggested by any tradition, that the person described by this double name was in fact the historical Cassius Longinus, should, if correct, be readily supported by some such presumption as we have suggested; since the philosopher-statesman left many writings, both on philosophy, and on literary subjects, of which we possess considerable fragments; yet no passage has been alleged which can fairly be quoted in this sense. The most favourable is one occurring in the *Rhetoric* of Longinus: 'Such language is, as it were, the light of thoughts and arguments.' This is sufficiently like 'beautiful words are, in all truth, a light peculiar to mind' (p. 55), but

the image finds a counterpart also in Plutarch[1]:—'As light to those who see, so speech is a good to those who hear,' and is, in fact, familiar in the phraseology of the Latin critics; while the idea of some words being intrinsically beautiful is quoted by Dionysius as from Theophrastus, three centuries before his own time. On some particular points the presumption is actually against identifying the two persons; such are the classification of the 'figures,' and the estimate of particular orators, though it would not be fair to press these discrepancies too closely.

It may seem somewhat strange that we cannot speak with more decision as to the internal evidence bearing on the question whether the treatise was composed in the first century or the third of our era, and whether it was or was not by the same hand as the parts of the *Rhetoric* recovered by the great scholar D. Ruhnken, and the other undoubted work of Cassius Longinus, for these are the two issues really before us. Such internal evidence would naturally present itself under the heads of—persons or events mentioned, vocabulary and style, and general point of view, whether literary or philosophical. In glancing at these three points, we must remember that more cogent evidence is required to set aside a tradition already existing, even a faint one, than to establish a claim *de novo*; and we therefore repeat that the inscription of the *Treatise on the Sublime*, which is the sole source of any tradition, leaves the authorship entirely uncertain.

[1] *De rec: rat. aud:* c. 5.

Of the numerous orators, poets, and historians discussed and quoted in the *Treatise*, the latest in date is probably Matris (p. 6); at any rate, no one is named who belongs to a period later than the Augustan. It was formerly thought that Ammonius, named on p. 30, was an exception, but it turns out to be an exception which 'proves the rule,' for the reference is certainly not to Ammonius Saccas, one of the teachers of Cassius Longinus, but to a critic who lived before the time of Augustus, and who wrote on the particular subjects indicated in the passage. Again, the *Treatise* is based upon a work with the same title by Caecilius, a critic who enjoyed great reputation in the first century A.D., and himself lived in its earlier years. It is possible, but seems very unlikely, that an answer (for all the mentions of Caecilius are unfavourable) should be made in so much detail to a work written several generations back; and the words used suggest at least that the author and the younger friend addressed read the work of Caecilius together when it was fresh from his pen. The notice of dwarfs (p. 79) and of the Pythian oracle (p. 30) make for the earlier date, and also the mention, in the imperfect tense, of a practice of Theodorus of Gadara, tutor of the Emperor Tiberius (p. 7). Of Postumius Terentianus nothing is known. From the terms in which he is addressed, he appears to have been a younger friend, and a close friend, of the author. 'Excellent' (p. 70) should imply official rank (see Acts xxiii. 26, and xxvi. 25), and the author has in view readers among men in public life (p. 1). How-

ever, the 'Complaisant man' of Theophrastus (char. v) hails an ordinary acquaintance as 'Excellent.'

The style of the *Treatise*, that is, of the Greek constructions and idioms used, does not seem to give any tangible criterion. The Greek used by writers of the time of the Roman Empire was fixed and artificial, with little growth or vitality of its own, but capable of immense variation, according to the individuality of authors so different as Dionysius, Plutarch, Dion Chrysostom, Lucian. Vocabulary does offer a test: the subject cannot be profitably discussed here, but it may be said that a careful analysis has been made by M. Louis Vaucher[1], who finds that there are few terms, not quite common-place, which are used both in the *Treatise* and also by Cassius Longinus, while a very large number of words characteristic of the former seem to have fallen out of use when the latter wrote, or had changed their meaning. We may mention, as a term of some general interest, the word Allegory (p. 17); it is used, as it is by Quintilian and Cicero, in the sense familiar to us, whereas in the *Rhetoric* of Longinus it means the substitution, for the sake of variety, of one word or phrase for another. That M. Vaucher went on, strangely as it has seemed to most people, to argue that the author of our *Treatise* was no other than Plutarch, does not in any way impair the cogency of his negative conclusion, nor yet the great value and interest of his excellent studies.

The attitude of Cassius Longinus to the great authors

[1] *Études critiques*, 1854.

is widely different from that of our *Treatise*. Both write as men of vast reading and of a high order of intellect, both admire profoundly and intelligently the masters of Greek letters. But the former thinks of them, and recommends them, as models of style, the latter as containing and inspiring great thought. Both were sincere admirers of Plato, and both found, or allowed the existence of certain shortcomings; but the one critic most enjoys his felicity of language and harmony of composition, the other the richness and grandeur of his conception. Equally different is their feeling to the world of men outside. The Minister of Zenobia was a Neo-Platonist teacher, perhaps more at home, as was said of him by Plotinus, in philology than in philosophy, yet concerned with questions of the soul and of Being. The *Treatise* is written for men engaged in public life, the one worthy end of life is, in the author's eyes, not speculation but service, the relief of man's estate. The word is common in Plato, though used rather of service to friends and comrades than to humanity; we recognize it as the aim of a Prometheus, a Hercules, a Socrates. To Cicero and to the later Academics, as well as to the Stoics, it was familiar, but it had no place in Neo-Platonic teaching. In other respects, the outlook upon life is, as has been remarked, much that of Tacitus; the complaint of the paucity of men of genius or greatness, the observation that we disparage what is with us and extol the past, the demand for liberty as for the air essential to great thought. And the ideas in it belong,

in conception and character, as has been lately explained with great force by a scholar of authority (G. Kaibel[1]), to an age when thought was free, and when great questions were daily thrown into its glowing crucible, not to one of cramped formulae and rigid system.

We part very unwillingly with a tradition which assigns so interesting a book to so barren a period, and which associates it with the name of a great and unfortunate man. Probably it will always be known under the name of Longinus, and little harm will be done. I have stated the conditions of the problem, of course, in very brief outline. As the author says: 'Let every one take the view which pleases him, and enjoy it.'

The nature and quality of the criticism contained in the *Treatise* will be best learned from the author himself, and we need not anticipate. Two points are especially conspicuous. One is the sureness of the judgement with which he fixes on the really great writers and the real causes of their greatness. His steady eye is never dazzled by the glare of some merely ephemeral reputation. 'Every college youth,' says a speaker in the *Dialogue* of Tacitus, 'hugs the opinion that he is a better speaker than Cicero, though of course far below Gabinianus,' and this pardonable enthusiasm is a really distracting element in criticism. Yet our critic does not disparage his contemporaries, and recognizes the infirmity, apparent to Horace and to

[1] *Hermes*, vol. xxxiv.

Tacitus, which makes us prone to that pettiness. The result is that his verdict is at one with that recorded by the universal voice of men, of all places, and in every age. The other point is his constant endeavour—one which we have already noticed in Burke—to rest his judgement upon settled principles—the true criteria of greatness, the necessity of selecting and combining salient points, the relation of passion to the forms of speech, the value of harmonious composition.

Of his own style we need add little. The reader will notice how, unconsciously following his own principles, he falls into the vein of the author whom he is for the time discussing, and seems to reproduce the profuse imagery of Plato, the grace of Hyperides, the condensation of Demosthenes, and the 'perils' of the mighty periods of the same supreme orator.

Two particular metaphors call for a word of notice. One lies in the elaborate series of images drawn from the craft of the mason (pp. 26, 74, &c.).

To us they seem familiar enough, though the expressions used are difficult, perhaps because they have entered into our language through the New Testament, and ultimately from the Old. In Greek poets we have frequent reference, in connexion with Fate, to the coping-stone, a rudimentary feature of the art; one reference to more elaborate structures in Euripides' *Hippolytus*, 468; and one to a splendid temple-front in Pindar. But, in fact, Architecture did not rank as one of the Fine Arts, and perhaps did not greatly stir the Greek mind; one of its purposes was to provide a

framework for beautiful carving or pictures, but in itself it was merely 'useful' (see Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, c. ii). Nor was it far otherwise in Roman ideas. The imagery repeatedly drawn from walls and their constituents in this *Treatise* touches on something new.

Another remarkable image is that applied to Homer, who, in the old age of his genius, which gave birth to the *Odyssey*, is likened to the sea at ebb tide, confined within the solitude of his own proper limits, but leaving pools and creeks about which the retiring waters meander. This personal conception of Ocean, an old man with a proper home of his own, recalls the romantic character in the *Prometheus* of Aeschylus, and it is strange that critics have found difficulty in the words used in our text. But the tides were not, and could not be, within the observation of Greek writers, who have therefore contributed little to the science or to the poetry connected with them. The Romans have little more to tell us, till we come to Caesar and his experiences in Gaul; and there are some really striking lines in Silius Italicus describing the surprise of Hannibal, when he passed the Straits of Gibraltar, and found the new experience awaiting him on the Atlantic coast. Tacitus also, in the *Agricola*, expresses his wonder at the great tidal rivers of Britain. The phenomenon is one which would be sure to appeal to our author, with his awe at all that is vast in Nature; but we should like to know in what part of the world his own eyes had seen it.

A characteristic feature of the *Treatise* is the abundance of quotations. Many passages, some long ones, are quoted for the purpose of literary criticism, from Homer, Plato, Demosthenes, and numerous other writers. Great liberties are taken with the text; two or more passages of Homer are rolled into one, sentences of Demosthenes are curtailed, and words or phrases are altered. There is nothing to be surprised at in this; the precise Aristotle is a very loose quoter. Apart from these, the writer often glides into the words of a poet or of Plato, and makes them his own; in many cases we can recognize the passage (see pp. 40, 81); in others the metrical run of the words, and their poetical colouring (sometimes, as on p. 64, the dialect), make it probable that they are borrowed. This habit of unacknowledged quotation, though not unparalleled in Greek and Latin writers, has a strangely modern effect; still more so when there is a touch of sentiment, as when we are told (p. 67), in the words of a well-known epigram, that the fame of great writers is safe and inalienable

As long as waters flow and poplars bloom.

The word 'sublime,' which is now inseparably associated with this treatise, is a somewhat embarrassing one in English, but perhaps its analysis need not trouble us much. It is not found at all in Shakespeare, nor apparently in Spenser, but is used freely by Milton; probably Boileau and Addison have had much to do with making it at home in our language. Coleridge, who has elsewhere examined the word more fully, is reported

in the *Table Talk* as saying: 'Could you ever discover anything sublime, in our sense of the term, in the Classical Greek Literature? I never could. Sublimity is Hebrew by birth.' Certainly we feel that the word is more properly applied to certain parts of the Old Testament than to anything else—to the account of the Creation, to the Book of Job. There are passages of Greek literature, which any of us could name as almost equally deserving to be called sublime, but it is noticeable that, with the exception of the Death of Oedipus, and perhaps of some others, they are not among those mentioned in the *Treatise.* We should like to ask Coleridge the exact meaning of 'in our sense of the term.' When so correct a writer as Goldsmith makes Dr. Primrose tell us how he thought proper to exhort his family before the happy marriages which make the *Vicar* a 'comedy': 'I told them of the grave, becoming, and sublime deportment they should assume upon this mystical occasion,' the last adjective seems to have travelled far from any Hebrew associations. Certainly the German language may be held fortunate in possessing a word of home growth to express the sublime.

'Best leave these things to take their chance,' as our author quotes (p. 81), and turn to the word used in the original. It means simply 'height,' and we have no reason to think that, before the treatise of Caecilius, it or its adjective had been used in any fixed literary sense. The Latin equivalent, *sublimis*, is often so used, but perhaps always with some feeling of the original

meaning of height as a dimension in space. In the *Treatise*, sublimity is almost equivalent to greatness, but the author expressly tells us that there may be greatness without sublimity. The two words 'sublimity' and 'greatness' are used in the singular and the plural, in an abstract and in a concrete sense, in a manner often baffling to a translator. For the greatness which is so near sublimity the author. has a profound respect, which the true Greek hardly shares. Size is a factor of beauty in Aristotle's view, but primarily because a certain size is needed to make the symmetry of parts perceptible; of the awe-inspiring wonder which raises the beautiful to the sublime he gives no hint. Herodotus wonders at the Nile; but with the wonder of curiosity as to its hidden origin and mysterious periods of fullness, and its symmetry with rivers of Europe, the wonder which says '*I* want to know,' not the wonder which hears a voice warning him that the ground is holy; a true Greek would feel the same if brought in sight of the Victoria Falls or the 'Golden Throne.' Our author speaks with awe of the great things in Nature, because they are great; of Nile and Ister and Ocean, and of that Aetna which to Pindar was merely a pillar of dazzling snow planted on the shaggy breast of the foe of Zeus, vomiting fire unapproachable.

So of intellectual greatness; the test of it is the awe which it inspires. Hyperides never makes his hearer afraid, Demosthenes is terrible as a thunderstorm if Homer falls off in his *Odyssey*, it is because he please

and interests, but no longer awes. This point of view is pressed throughout the treatise with an intensity and earnestness which would be monotonous if there were not so much power, expressed and latent, under it all. No sense of humour relieves the tension; little distinction is, in fact, made between prose and poetry, though the author recognizes (p. 33) that they require separate treatment; he scolds Plato for his imagery, without allowing for the fact that Plato is avowedly quoting poetry. Yet the sheer greatness of the argument invariably saves it, and it is the greatness of a good man. In this short and fragmentary pamphlet of an austere and strenuous critic, we hear sometimes the notes of that wisdom which is 'kind to man,' and catch gleams of that intellectual light which is 'full of love.'

Some apology may seem to be required for a new translation of a book which has been so excellently translated already. I can only offer the old one, that no translation of a classical author is final, and that a new translator may bring out some sides of an author's meaning which have not perhaps been already represented. I hope that I have not carried independence too far in replacing (on p. 63) a singularly happy phrase of Sir R. C. Jebb's, which I had at first wished to borrow, by inferior words. But it appeared, on reflection, that a brilliant phrase, when borrowed, becomes something other than itself; it acquires, so to say, a second intention, and is more rightly left in its own surroundings. To the complete and scholarly

work of Professor Rhys Roberts, which has done so much to make the study of the *Treatise* possible to others, and to the brilliant translation of Mr. Havell, I feel myself constantly indebted. Perhaps the translation on which I have most relied for help has been the fine Latin version of Bishop Pearce.

I have a more personal debt of obligation, which I warmly and gratefully acknowledge, to my friends Mr. E. D. A. Morshead and Mr. H. E. Butler, for much invaluable help, and to the Rev. A. H. Cruickshank for guidance in a matter of special difficulty. For any omissions or errors I am solely responsible.

The text used has been that of the Oxford Classical Texts, 1906, to the notes of which I may be allowed to refer any scholar into whose hands this translation may come. The passages from Homer are quoted in Worsley's translation (completed by Conington); those from other authors in standard translations where available. The division into sections (an extraordinarily perverse one) is due to an edition of 1569. I have usually referred to pages.

In the Appendix will be found specimen passages translated from various later Greek critics, of whom the historical Cassius Longinus is one; a note on certain Latin critics considered in relation to the subject-matter of the *Treatise*; and some extracts from Bishop Lowth's Professorial Lectures on Hebrew Poetry, translated from the Latin.

ANALYSIS OF CONTENTS

SECT. 1. The treatment of the Sublime by Caecilius is inadequate, and fails to tell practical men how its effects are attained. The Sublime is 'an eminence and excellence of language,' and its aim both in poetry and in prose is to carry men out of themselves: this is done by a single powerful and well-timed stroke.

SECT. 2. Is there an art of Sublimity, i. e. can the word Art be applied to what is natural? Yes; for Nature herself does not work at random, and the greatest natural forces are the most dangerous unless regulated (Nature comes first, Art is second, but no less essential). Also it requires Art to estimate genius aright.

[*A gap equal to about* 6 *pages of this book.*]

[The special dangers to which great genius is exposed.]

SECT. 3. (i) *Turgidity* (instance from Tragedy): this is *a fortiori* a fault in prose. It is a fault to which all greatness is liable, and easily works round to its opposite. (ii) *Puerility*—the very opposite of greatness—comes out of a straining for what is artificial and high-flown. (iii) *Parenthyrsus*, i. e. passion out of season.

SECT. 4. (iv) *Frigidity*, a straining after novelty. Instances quoted out of Timaeus; but see Caecilius for others. Plato and Xenophon are not wholly free.

SECT. 5. All these faults come out of a craze for novelty, misdirected.

SECT. 6. Can we find a rule for avoiding them? Yes, if we can frame a complete working definition of 'Sublimity.'

SECT. 7. Test. If the thought does not bear repetition, i.e. if when repeated it does not raise the thoughts upwards, but itself falls more flat on the ear each time, it is no true Sublime. The verdict of all men through all ages is final.

SECT. 8. Five sources of the Sublime (power of speech being presupposed): viz. A. Natural, (i) grasp of great thoughts, (ii) passion; B. Artificial, (iii) 'Figures,' whether of thought or of language; (iv) diction; (v) composition. (Caecilius gives an incomplete list, omitting passion, which is not co-extensive with sublimity, but is its powerful ally.)

[*A gap of* 18 *pages.*]

SECT. 9. (i) Great thoughts. 'Sublimity rings from a great soul.' The Sublimity of Silence—The Silence of Ajax in the Lower World (*Odyssey* xi). Homeric instance—The Battle of the Gods is sublime, but lowers gods to men. The pure divine in Homer. Illustration from Genesis. The human sublime, in Homer: the Prayer of Ajax for light. (Digression on the *Odyssey*, the work of Homer's old age. His genius compared to the setting sun, or the ebbing Ocean, but always the genius of Homer. Hence the 'Märchen,' the story telling and character sketches.)

SECT. 10. Rule for the application of great thoughts—select the most essential, and combine them into a whole, omitting secondary detail. So Sappho portrays the lover, Homer a storm, Archilochus a shipwreck, Demosthenes the arrival of the news of Elateia. Build with squared blocks, no rubble between them.

SECTS. 11 and 12. 'Amplification,' the enhancing a thought in successive stages of the treatment, is useful, but, unless helped by sublimity, is merely mechanical, working by mass, not by elevation. Exceptions, when

the object is to excite pity or depreciation. To the sublime, quantity is irrelevant.

[*Gap of* 6 *pages.*]

[Plato and Demosthenes compared: Plato often affects us by quantity, Demosthenes by intensity.] Cicero and Demosthenes compared in a somewhat similar sense.

SECT. 13. The real greatness of Plato illustrated (from *Republic* ix). Plato points us the road to greatness, viz. the imitation of great predecessors. Plato steeped himself in Homer: he entered the lists against him.

SECT. 14. We too should think how Homer, Plato, or Demosthenes would have expressed this or that thought: how they would have endured this or that expression of ours. Nay, how will all future ages endure those expressions. A great issue, but it is cowardice to shrink.

SECT. 15. Imagination and Images defined. Their use in oratory and in poetry distinct. Employment by Euripides, Aeschylus, Sophocles. Misused in modern oratory—the right use illustrated from Demosthenes and Hyperides.

SECT. 16. [The second source of Sublimity—Passion—is not treated here; see above, Sect. iii, and the last words of the Treatise.] (iii) *The Figures.* Only a few can be mentioned. *Adjuration*, illustrated from the *De Corona* of Demosthenes, where the circumstances make the oath sublime (contrast its bare use by the Comic Poet Eupolis).

SECT. 17. The Author quotes from himself a conclusion that the Figures help Sublimity, but Sublimity and Passion are essential to the Figures, which otherwise are so many tricks. The oath by 'the dead of

Marathon' would be but an artifice, if the artifice did not pass in the fierce light of the speaker's feeling.

SECT. 18. The Figures continued. *Question and Answer.* Instance from Herodotus.

[*A gap of 4 pages.*]

SECT. 19. *Asyndeton* (i.e. omission of connecting words).

SECT. 20. Combination of Asyndeton with other figures often effective. Instance from the *Midias* of Demosthenes.

SECT. 21. Introduce the missing conjunctions in such instances of Asyndeton, and the passage is spoiled.

SECT. 22. *Hyperbata* (inversion of order) give the effect of reality and passion. Thucydides, Demosthenes.

SECT. 23. *Polyptota*—interchange of case, &c.—Plural for singular.

SECT. 24. Singular for plural.

SECT. 25. Present for past.

SECT. 26. Change of person—To the Second. Instance from Herodotus.

SECT. 27. To the First. Instances from Homer and Hecataeus.

SECT. 28. *Periphrasis* enriches style. Instances from Xenophon, Thucydides, Herodotus.

SECT. 29. Periphrasis requires more discretion than any other Figure.

SECT. 30. Choice of words, a potent factor in expression.

[*A gap of 12 pages.*]

SECT. 31. The author is challenging certain judgements of Caecilius upon (i) homeliness of phrase, which may be justified by its vigour; (ii) number of metaphors: as to this, the practice of Demosthenes is the standard,

and the intensity of the passion the justification. (Aristotle and Theophrastus rightly commend the use of qualifying words.) Metaphors are also effective in laboured description. Instances from Xenophon and Plato (*Timaeus*). Plato's excess in Metaphor is a fault, and Caecilius therefore prefers the faultless Lysias, but wrongly.

SECT. 33. We must argue this point out. Which are we to prefer—greatness with faults, or faultlessness which stops there? And again—the most claims to excellence, or the greatest? I can have no doubt. Remember that (i) Genius has a special risk of falling; (ii) Men mark failures and often omit to mark greatness. To be Homer or Apollonius? Bacchylides or Pindar? Ion or Sophocles?

SECT. 34. Hyperides or Demosthenes? The two Orators are elaborately compared. Demosthenes makes up for the powers he lacks by the terrible intensity of those which he has.

SECT. 35. Plato or Lysias (to return to them)? But Lysias has fewer merits than Plato, and worse faults. Nature herself has made Man with aspirations and affinities towards greatness. He admires the stupendous things in Nature—rivers, ocean, volcanoes—not things useful and ordinary.

SECT. 36. Thus it is sublimity, not faultlessness, which brings Man near to the divine: Homer, Demosthenes, Plato have their failures, but these are as nothing when set against their greatness—therefore they are the immortals. *Objection.*—A faulty statue is not redeemed by its size. *Answer.*—In Art correctness is the first thing, in Nature greatness. But language is a natural gift.

SECT. 37. Similes, &c.

[*A gap of* 6 *pages.*]

SECT. 38. Hyperbole in excess becomes ridiculous. When rightly used it should be unnoticed that it is hyperbole: and this will be so when there is passion to support it. So comic exaggeration is supported by being ludicrous (for laughter is a passion, but one which goes with pleasure, not pain).

SECT. 39. Arrangement of words (Composition): the fifth and last constituent of Sublimity (see sect. 8). A great factor not only of persuasion but also of passion: as great as music but not as enthralling. This illustrated from a famous passage of Demosthenes.

SECT. 40. A sentence or a period is an organic structure: words and phrases contribute to a whole, which is greater than their mere sum. Writers of limited ability may touch greatness by rhythm and arrangement.

SECTS. 41-3. Causes of sinking in style, broken and jingling rhythm, scrappy phrases (like rubble in masonry), condensation or diffuseness in excess, vulgar idioms and words (instance from Theopompus)—all the opposites of what we have found to be factors of sublimity.

SECT. 44. The question has been raised: Why have we many clever men now, but no great men? Is the reason political—that the stimulus given by democracy is now wanting, and that we are cramped and checked by despotism? The answer:—(i) Men always think their own times the worst. (ii) It is not the peace of the world which levels us down, but our own habits; our [illegible]

CONTENTS

CONCERNING SUBLIMITY

I

THE treatise written by Caecilius 'concerning Sublimity' appeared to us, as you will remember, dear Postumius Terentianus, when we looked into it together, to fall below the level of the general subject, failing especially in grasp of vital points; and to give his readers but little of that assistance which should be the first aim of every writer. In any technical treatise two points are essential; the first, that the writer should show what the thing proposed for inquiry is; the second, but in effect the more important, that he should tell us by what specific methods that thing may be made our own. Now Caecilius endeavours to show us by a vast number of instances what the sublime is, as though we did not know; the process by which we may raise our natural powers to a required advance in scale he unaccountably passed over as unnecessary. So far as he is concerned, perhaps we ought to praise the man for his ingenuity and pains, not to blame him for the omissions. Since, however, you lay your commands upon me, that I should take up the subject in my turn, and without fail put something on paper about Sublimity as a favour to yourself, give me your company; let us see whether there is anything in the views which I have formed really serviceable to men in

public life. You, comrade, will help me by passing judgement, with perfect frankness, upon all particulars; you can and you ought. It was well answered by one[1] who wished to show wherein we resemble gods: 'in doing good,' said he, 'and in speaking truth.'

Writing to you, my dear friend, with your perfect knowledge of all liberal study, I am almost relieved at the outset from the necessity of showing at any length that Sublimity is always an eminence and excellence in language; and that from this, and this alone, the greatest poets and writers of prose have attained the first place and have clothed their fame with immortality. For it is not to persuasion[2] but to ecstasy that passages of extraordinary genius carry the hearer: now the marvellous, with its power to amaze, is always and necessarily stronger than that which seeks to persuade and to please: to be persuaded rests usually with ourselves, genius brings force sovereign and irresistible to bear upon every hearer, and takes its stand high above him. Again, skill in invention and power of orderly arrangement are not seen from one passage nor from two, but emerge with effort out of the whole context; Sublimity, we know, brought out at the happy moment, parts all the matter this way and that,

[1] 'Pythagoras used to say that the two fairest gifts of gods to men were to speak truth and to do good, and would add that each of the two resembles the works of gods.'—*Aelian*, vii. 12, 59. A similar remark is attributed to Demosthenes.

[2] Rhetoric is defined by Aristotle as 'a faculty of discovering all the possible means of *persuasion* in any subject.' *Rhet.* i. c. 2, Tr. Welldon.

and like a lightning flash, reveals, at a stroke and in its entirety, the power of the orator[1].) These and suchlike considerations I think, my dear Terentianus, that your own experience might supply.

II

WE, however, must at once raise this further question; is there any art of sublimity or of its opposite?[2] For some go so far as to think all who would bring such terms under technical rules to be entirely mistaken. 'Genius,' says one, 'is inbred, not taught; there is one art for the things of genius, to be born with them.' All natural effects are spoilt, they think, by technical rules, and become miserable skeletons. I assert that the reverse will prove true on examination, if we consider that Nature, a law to

[1] 'The Sublime impresses the mind at once with one great idea; it is a single blow: the Elegant, indeed, may be produced by repetition, by an accumulation of many circumstances.'—Sir J Reynolds, *Fourth Discourse*

[2] *If these words (literally 'of height or of depth') are rightly translated above, Pope's 'Art of sinking' is also right, though he was taken to task by scholars for the phrase It was probably suggested to him by a friend, perhaps Arbuthnot, since Boileau, in his translation, the only one, apparently, known to Pope, omits the second noun.* The alternative is to render 'of sublimity, or (which is the same thing) of profundity.' But the idea in the context seems to be that of rising or sinking at will to a given point in the scale the phrase would naturally come from an opponent who derided the existence of such an art. Sections XL–XLII, at the end of the Treatise, deal with the question how style may be *lowered*.

herself as she mostly is in all that is passionate and lofty, yet is no creature of random impulse delighting in mere absence of method; that she is indeed herself the first and originating principle which underlies all things, yet rules of degree, of fitting occasion, of unerring practice, and of application can be determined by method and are its contribution; in a sense all greatness is exposed to a danger of its own, if left to itself without science to control, 'unsteadied, unballasted[1],' abandoned to mere velocity and uninstructed venture; greatness needs the spur often, it also needs the bit[2]. What Demosthenes shows to be true of the common life of men—that of all good things the greatest is good fortune, but a second, not inferior to the first, is good counsel, and that where the latter is wanting the former is at once cancelled[3]—we may properly apply to literature; here Nature fills the place of good fortune, Art of good counsel. Also, and this is most important, it is only from Art that we can learn the very fact that certain effects in literature rest on Nature and on her alone[4]. If, as I said, the

[1] The latter of the two adjectives is applied by Plato (*Theaet.* p. 144 A) to boats, which word possibly stood in the text here.

[2] Words said to have been used by Plato about Xenocrates and Aristotle, and by Aristotle himself about two pupils; also by Isocrates, as Cicero twice tells us (*Brutus*, 205 and *Letters to Atticus*, 6, 1) about Theopompus (see p. 55) and Ephorus.

[3] Demosthenes, *Aristocr.* 113.

[4] Cicero, in the *Brutus* (181, &c.), discusses the question whether the opinion of the general public or of the expert upon the merits of an orator is the more important. The answer is

critic who finds fault with earnest students, would take all these things into his account, he would in my opinion no longer deem inquiry upon the subjects before us to be unnecessary or unfruitful.

[*Here the equivalent of about six pages of this translation has been lost.*]

III

Stay they the furnace! quench the far-flung blaze!
For if I spy one crouching habitant,
I'll twist a lock, one lock of storm-borne flame,
And fire the roof, and char the halls to ash:
Not yet, not now my noble strain is raised[1].

ALL this is tragic no longer, but burlesque of tragic; 'locks,' 'to vomit up to heaven,' 'Boreas turned flute player,' and the rest. It is turbid in expression, and confused in imagery, not forcible; and if you examine each detail in clear light, you see a gradual sinking from the terrible to the contemptible. Now when in tragedy, which by its nature is pompous and admits bombast, tasteless rant is found to be unpardonable[2], I should be slow to allow that it could be in

that on the question of effectiveness in speaking the verdict of the public is final, that of the specialist is still required to determine the causes of effectiveness or failure, also to pronounce whether the orator is absolutely excellent, or only appears to be so in the absence of his betters.

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place in true history. Thus we laugh at Gorgias[1] of Leontini for writing 'Xerxes the Zeus of the Persians' and 'vultures, those living tombs,' and at some passages in Callisthenes[2] as being stilted, not sublime, and even more at some in Cleitarchus[3]; he is a mere fantastic, he 'puffs,' to apply the words of Sophocles, 'on puny pipes, *but* with no mellowing gag[4].' So with Amphicrates, Hegesias, and Matris[5]; they often appear to themselves to be possessed, really they are no inspired revellers but children at play. We may take it that turgidity is of all faults perhaps the most difficult to avoid. It is a fact of Nature that all men who aim at grandeur, in avoiding the reproach of being weak and dry, are, we know not how, borne off into turgidity, caught by the adage:— 'To lapse from greatness were a generous fault[6].' As

words, so contrived together as to carry no meaning? which I shall one day or other prove to be the Sublime of Longinus.'

Fielding, Introduction to *Tom Thumb*.

[1] A Sicilian teacher of rhetoric (about B.C. 480–370), a speaker in the dialogue of Plato which bears his name.

[2] Philosopher, historian, and rhetorician, a pupil of Aristotle (died about B.C. 328).

[3] Cleitarchus, Historian of Alexander the Great.

[4] Sophocles had written 'he puffs no longer on puny pipes, but with fierce bellows and no mouthpiece (to modify the sound).' The lines, in their original form, are quoted by Cicero of Pompey (ad *Att.* ii. 16, 2).

[5] Amphicrates: an Athenian rhetorician and sophist, who died at the Court of Tigranes, about B.C. 70. Hegesias: a rhetorician, native of Magnesia, probably of the third century B.C., who wrote on Alexander the Great. Matris of Thebes: author of an encomium on Hercules; mentioned by Diodorus Siculus, and therefore not later than the Augustan period.

[6] A proverb, doubtless familiar in a metrical form. Com-

in bodies, so in writings, all swellings which are hollow and unreal are bad, and very possibly work round to the opposite condition, for 'nothing,' they say, 'so dry as a man with dropsy.'

While tumidity thus tends to overshoot the sublime, puerility is the direct opposite of all that is great; it is in every sense low and small spirited, and essentially a most ignoble fault. What then is puerility? Clearly it is a pedantic conceit, which overdoes itself and becomes frigid at the last. Authors glide into this when they make for what is unusual, artificial, above all, agreeable, and so run on the reefs of nonsense and affectation. By the side of these is a third kind of vice, found in passages of strong feeling, and called by Theodorus[1] 'Parenthyrsus.' This is passion out of place and unmeaning, where there is no call for passion, or unrestrained where restraint is needed. Men are carried aside, as if under strong drink, into expressions of feeling which have nothing to do with the subject, but are personal to themselves and academic: then they play clumsy antics before an audience which has never been moved; it cannot be otherwise, when the speakers are in an ecstasy, and the hearers are not. But we reserve room to speak of the passions elsewhere.

pare Ovid's fine lines on the fall of Phaethon (*Met.* ii 325)—

> His limbs, yet reeking from that lightning flame,
> The kindly nymphs entomb, and grave his name:
> 'Phaethon lies here, who grasped the steeds of Day,
> Then greatly fell, yet from a great essay!'

[1] Of Gadara, or Rhodes: a rhetorician, and instructor of the Emperor Tiberius (Suetonius, *Tib.* 57).

IV

OF the second fault which we mentioned, frigidity, Timaeus[1] is full; an able author in other respects, and not always wanting in greatness of style; learned, acute, but extremely critical of the faults of others, while insensible to his own; often sinking into mere childishness from an incessant desire to start new notions. I will set down one or two instances only from this author, since Caecilius has been before me with most of them. Praising Alexander the Great, he writes: 'who annexed all Asia in fewer years than Isocrates[2] took to write his *Panegyricus* in support of war against the Persians.' Truly a wonderful comparison between the Macedonian and the Sophist: yes, Timaeus, clearly the Lacedaemonians were far out-matched by Isocrates in valour, for they took Messene in thirty years, he composed his *Panegyricus* in ten! Then how he turns upon the Athenians captured in Sicily: 'Because they committed impiety against Hermes, and defaced his images, they suffered punishment for it, largely on account of one man, a descendant, on the father's side, of the injured god, Hermocrates, son of Hermon.' This makes me wonder, dear Terentianus, that he does not also write of the tyrant Dionysius: 'He had shown impiety towards

[1] A Sicilian historian (about B.C. 352–256), severely criticized by Polybius.

[2] A great, but somewhat tedious, Athenian orator (B.C. 436–338), 'the old man eloquent' of Milton's sonnet. See p. 44. *The Panegyricus* was originally composed for the Olympic festival of 380.

Zeus[1] and Heracles; therefore he was deprived of his kingdom by Dion and Heraclides.' What need to speak of Timaeus, when those heroes Xenophon and Plato, although they were of Socrates' own school, sometimes forgot themselves in such paltry attempts to please. Thus Xenophon writes in the *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians*: 'I mean to say that you can no more hear their voices than if they were made of stone, no more draw their eyes aside than if they were made of brass; you might think them more modest than the maiden-pupils in their eyes.' It was worthy of Amphicrates[2], not of Xenophon, to call the pupils in our eyes 'modest maidens': but what a notion, to believe that the eyes of a whole row were modest, whereas they say that immodesty in particular persons is expressed by nothing so much as by the eyes. Addressing a forward person, 'Wine laden, dog-eyed!' says Homer[3]. Timaeus, however, as if clutching *at stolen goods, has not left to Xenophon even this point* of frigidity. He says, speaking of Agathocles, that he even carried off his cousin, who had been given in marriage to another man, from the solemnity of Unveiling; 'Now who would have done this, who had maidens, not harlots, in his eyes?' Nay, Plato, the divine, as at

[1] Zeus gives in the genitive Dios, &c

[2] Athenian soldier and historian (about B.C. 444-354). In our texts of the work quoted the words run: 'than maidens in their chambers' instead of 'than maidens in the eyes.' Our Author is often loose in his quotations, but this is a strange variation. The same play on the Greek word for 'pupils' occurs in Plutarch (*De Vit. Pud.* i. 528 E).

[3] *Il.* i. 225.

other times he is, wishing to mention tablets, says: 'they will write and store in the temples memorials of cypress wood,' and again 'concerning walls, O Megillus, I would take the Spartan view, to allow our walls to sleep on the ground where they lie, and not be raised again.'[1] And Herodotus is hardly clear of this fault, when he calls beautiful women 'pains to the eyes'[2]; though he has some excuse, for the speakers in Herodotus are barbarians and in drink: still, not even through the mouths of such characters is it well, out of sheer pettiness, to cut a clumsy figure before all time.

V

ALL these undignified faults spring up in literature from a single cause, the craving for intellectual novelties, on which, above all else, our own generation goes wild. It would almost be true to say that the sources of all the good in us are also the sources of all the bad. Thus beauties of expression, and all which is sublime, I will add, all which is agreeable, contribute to success in our writing; and yet every one of these becomes a principle and a foundation, as of success, so of its opposite. Much the same is to be said of changes of construction, hyperboles, plurals for singulars; we will show in the sequel the danger which seems to attend each. Therefore it is necessary at once to raise the question directly, and to show how it is possible for us to escape the vices thus intimately mingled with the sublime.

[1] Plato, *Laws*, vi. p. 778 D. [2] Herodotus, v. 18.

VI

IT is possible, my friend, to do this, if we could first of all arrive at a clear and discriminating knowledge of what true sublimity is. Yet this is hard to grasp: judgement of style is the last and ripest fruit of much experience. Still, if I am to speak in the language of precept, it is perhaps not impossible, from some such remarks as follow, to attain to a right decision upon the matter.

VII

WE must, dear friend, know this truth. As in our ordinary life nothing is great which it is a mark of greatness to despise; as fortunes, offices, honours, kingdoms, and such like, things which are praised so pompously from without, could never appear, at least to a sensible man, to be surpassingly good, since actual contempt for them is a good of no mean kind (certainly men admire, more han those who have them, those who might have them, ut in greatness of soul let them pass); even so it is ith all that is elevated in poetry and prose writings; e have to ask whether it may be that they have that age of greatness to which so much careless praise is ached, but on a close scrutiny would be found vain l hollow, things which it is nobler to despise than dmire. For it is a fact of Nature that the soul is

raised by true sublimity, it gains a proud step upwards, it is filled with joy and exultation, as though itself had produced what it hears. Whenever therefore anything is heard frequently by a man of sense and literary experience, but does not dispose his mind to high thoughts, nor leave in it material for fresh reflection, beyond what is actually said; while it sinks, if you look carefully at the whole context, and dwindles away, this can never be true sublimity, being preserved so long only as it is heard. That is really great, which gives much food for fresh reflection; which it is hard, nay impossible, to resist; of which the memory is strong and indelible. You may take it that those are beautiful and genuine effects of sublimity which please always, and please all. For when men of different habits, lives, ambitions, ages, all take one and the same view about the same writings[1], the verdict and pronouncement of such dissimilar individuals give a powerful assurance, beyond all gainsaying, in favour of that which they admire.

VIII

NOW there are five different sources, so to call them, of lofty style, which are the most productive; power of expression being presupposed as a foundation common to all five types, and inseparable

[1] *The words are doubtful: the rendering given above follows* Bishop Pearce, *a contributor to the* Spectator, *and a scholarly and accomplished editor and translator of this treatise. Probably the order of the Greek words has been disarranged.*

from any. First and most potent is the faculty of grasping great conceptions, as I have defined it in my work on Xenophon. Second comes passion, strong and impetuous. These two constituents of sublimity are in most cases native-born, those which now follow come through art: the proper handling of figures, which again seem to fall under two heads, figures of thought, and figures of diction; then noble phraseology, with its subdivisions, choice of words, and use of tropes and of elaboration; and fifthly, that cause of greatness which includes in itself all that preceded it, dignified and spirited composition. Let us now look together at what is included under each of these heads, premising that Caecilius has passed over some of the five, for instance, passion. If he did so under the idea that sublimity and *feeling* are one and the same thing, coexistent and of common origin, he is entirely wrong. For some passions may be found which are distinct from sublimity and are humble, as those of pity, grief, fear; and again, in many cases, there is sublimity without passion; take, besides countless other instances, the poet's own venturesome lines on the Aloadae:

> Upon Olympus Ossa, leafy Pelion
> On Ossa would they pile, a stair to heaven;[1]

and the yet grander words which follow:

> Now had they worked their will.

In the Orators, again, speeches of panegyric, pomp,

[1] *Od.* xi. 315 and 317.

display, exhibit on every hand majesty and the sublime, but commonly lack passion: hence Orators of much passion succeed least in panegyric, and again the panegyrists are not strong in passion[1]. Or if, on the other hand, Caecilius did not think that passion ever contributes to sublimity, and, therefore, held it undeserving of mention, he is quite in error. I should feel confidence in maintaining that nothing reaches great eloquence so surely as genuine passion in the right place; it breathes the vehemence of frenzy and divine possession, and makes the very words inspired.

IX

AFTER all, however, the first element, great natural genius, covers far more ground than the others: therefore, as to this also, even if it be a gift rather than a thing acquired, yet so far as is possible we must nurture our souls to all that is great, and make them, as it were, teem with noble endowment. How? you will ask. I have myself written in another place to this effect:—'Sublimity is the note which rings from a great mind[2].' Thus it is that, without any utterance, a notion, unclothed and unsupported, often moves our wonder, because the very thought is great: the silence of Ajax in the book of the Lower World

[1] See *Spectator*, no. 389 (Addison).

[2] 'Eloquence is the ring of a great soul' (Dr. G. H. Rendall, *Classical Review*, vol. xiii, p. 402).

is great, and more sublime than any words[1]. First, then, it is quite necessary to presuppose the principle from which this springs: the true Orator must have no low ungenerous spirit, for it is not possible that they who think small thoughts, fit for slaves, and practise them in all their daily life, should put out anything to deserve wonder and immortality. Great words issue, and it cannot be otherwise, from those whose thoughts are weighty. So it is on the lips of men of the highest spirit that words of rare greatness are found. Take the answer of Alexander to Parmenio, who had said 'I were content . . .'[2]

[*Here about eighteen pages have been lost.*]

. . . the distance from earth to heaven, a measure one may call it of the stature as well of

[1] *Od* xi. 543.

> But never Aias, child of Telamon
> Came near me, but with gloomy brows and bent
> Stood far aloof, in sternness eminent,
> Eating his heart for that old victory
> Against him given by clear arbitrament,
> Concerning brave Achilleus' arms.

The scholiast on Homer observes: 'His silence is clearly a finer thing than the speeches in the tragic poets', a principle recognized by Aeschylus, insomuch that he was sometimes rallied upon his habit of keeping his characters silent, as though it had passed into a mannerism (Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 911)

[2] 'The story runs that Parmenio said to Alexander that, had he been Alexander, he would have been content to stop the war on those terms, and run no further risks; and that Alexander answered that he too, had he been Parmenio, would have done the same.' *Arrian*, ii. 25, 2.

Poseidon cleave the solid earth in twain,
And open the pale kingdom of the dead
Horrible, foul with blight, which e'en Immortals dread [1].

You see, comrade, how, when earth is torn up from its foundations, and Tartarus itself laid bare, and the Universe suffers overthrow and dissolution, all things at once, heaven and hell, things mortal and immortal, mingle in the war and the peril of that fight. Yet all this is terrible indeed, though, unless taken as allegory, thoroughly impious and out of proportion. For when Homer presents to us woundings of the gods, their *factions, revenges, tears, bonds, sufferings, all massed* together, it seems to me that, as he has done his uttermost to make the men of the Trojan war gods, so he has made the gods men. Only for us, when we are miserable, a harbour from our ills is reserved in death; the gods, as he draws them, are everlasting, not in their nature, but in their unhappiness. Far better than the 'Battle of the Gods' are the passages which show us divinity as something undefiled and truly great, with no admixture; for instance, to take a passage which has been worked out by many before us, the lines on Poseidon:

Tall mountains and wild woods, from height to
height,
The city and the vessels by the *main* . . .
Rocked to the immortal feet that, hurrying, bare
Poseidon in his wrath . . .
. . . the light wheels along the sea-plain rolled;

[1] *Il.* xx. 61–5.

Homer as of Strife[1]. Unlike this is the passage of Hesiod about Gloom (if *The Shield* is really to be assigned to Hesiod), 'From out her nostrils rheum in streams was poured'[2]: he has made the picture hateful, not terrible. But how does Homer make great all that belongs to gods?

> Far as the region of blank air in sight
> Of one who sitting on some beacon height
> Views the long wine-dark barrens of the deep,
> Such space the horses of the realm of light
> Urged by the gods, as on they strain and sweep,
> While their hoofs thunder aloft, bound over at one leap[3].

He measures their leap by the interval of the boundaries of the world. Who might not justly exclaim, when he marked this extravagance in greatness, that, if the horses of the gods make two leaps, leap after leap, they will no longer find room within the world. Passing great too are the appearances in the Battle of the Gods:—

> Heaven sent its clarion forth: Olympus too:[4]
> . . . .
> Trembled too Hades in his gloomy reign,
> And leapt up with a scream, lest o'er his head

[1] *Il.* iv. 442 (a description of Strife)

> 'small of stature, a low head
> At first she rears, but soon with loftier claim,
> Her forehead in the sky, the earth doth tread.'

[2] *The Shield of Hercules*, 267: the authorship of the poem was much disputed in antiquity. Hesiod may probably be placed in the eighth century B.C., his poetry belongs to a later date than any substantial part of Homer.

[3] *Il.* v. 770. [4] *Il.* xxi. 388, perhaps mixed up with v. 750.

From cave and lair the creatures of the deep
Flocked to sport round him, and the crystal heap
Of waters in wild joy disparting know
Their lord, and as the fleet pair onward sweep[1] . . .

Thus too the lawgiver of the Jews, no common man[2], when he had duly conceived the power of the Deity, showed it forth as duly. At the very beginning of his Laws, 'God said,' he writes—What? 'Let there be light, and there was light, let there be earth, and there was earth.' Perhaps I shall not seem wearisome, comrade, if I quote to you one other passage from the poet, this time on a human theme, that you may learn how he accustoms his readers to enter with him into majesties which are more than human. Gloom and impenetrable night suddenly cover the battle of the Greeks before him: then Ajax, in his helplessness, says:—

Zeus, sire, do thou the veil of darkness rend,
And make clear daylight, that our eyes may see:
Then in the light e'en slay us—[3].

[1] These lines are taken from *Il.* xiii. 18–29, with omissions, and with the exception of the second, which is read in xx. 60.

[2] 'The best general that ever was—for such I really think Moses was.'—Letter of General Sir Charles Napier, 1844. With 'conceived . . . showed forth,' words which cause some difficulty in the original, cf. Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, v. 21. 'I desire future readers of these books to apply their thoughts to God, and to examine whether our legislator worthily apprehended His nature, and always assigned to Him actions becoming His power.' With regard to the passage generally, see Introduction.

[3] *Il.* xvii. 645. With this passage compare the remarks of Burke:—'To make anything very terrible, obscurity seems in

Here is the very truth of the passion of Ajax: he does not pray to live—such a petition were too humble for the hero—but when in impracticable darkness he could dispose his valour to no good purpose, chafing that he stands idle for the battle, he prays for light at the speediest, sure of finding therein at the worst a burial worthy of his valour, even if Zeus be arrayed against him. Truly the spirit of Homer goes along with every struggle, in full and carrying gale; he feels the very thing himself, he 'rages;—[1]

[illegible]

Yet he shows throughout the *Odyssey* (for there are many reasons why we must look closely into passages from that poem also), that, when a great genius begins to decline, the love of story-telling is a mark of its old age. It is clear from many other indications that this work was the second; but more particularly from the fact that he introduces throughout the *Odyssey* remnants of the sufferings before Ilium, as so many additional episodes of the Trojan war, aye, and renders to its heroes fresh lamentations and words of pity, as though

general to be necessary. When we know the full extent of any danger, when we can accustom our eyes to it, a great deal of the apprehension vanishes'—*On the Sublime and Beautiful*, ii 3 Burke quotes Milton's description of Death in the Second Book of *Paradise Lost*, and observes 'In this description all is dark, uncertain, confused, terrible, and sublime to the last degree'

[1] *Il.* xv. 605.

awarded in some far distant time. Yes, the *Odyssey* is nothing but an epilogue of the *Iliad*:—

> There the brave Aias and Achilleus lie;
> Patroclus there, whose wisdom matched the gods on high;
> There too Antilochus my son. . .[1]

From the same cause, I think, writing the *Iliad* in the heyday of his spirit, he made the whole structure dramatic and combative; that of the *Odyssey* is in the main narrative, which is the special mark of age. So it is that in the *Odyssey* one might liken Homer to a setting sun; the intensity is gone, but there remains the greatness. Here the tone of those great lays of Ilium is no longer maintained—the passages on one level of sublimity with no sinking anywhere, the same stream of passion poured upon passion, the readiness of turn, the closeness to life, the throng of images all drawn from the truth: as when Ocean retires into himself, and is left lonely around his proper bounds, only the ebbings of his greatness are left to our view, and a wandering among the shallows of the fabulous and the incredible[2]. While I say this, I have not forgotten the storms in the *Odyssey*, nor the story of the Cyclops[3], nor certain other passages; I am describing an old age, but the old age of Homer. Still in all

[1] *Od.* iii. 109.

[2] The rich imagery of this passage must have been drawn from a knowledge of seas other than the almost tideless Mediterranean. Compare Tacitus' description of his wonder at the tides and tidal rivers of Britain in the *Agricola* (end of c. x), and see Introduction.

[3] *Od.* Book ix.

these, as they follow one another, fable prevails over action. I entered upon this digression, as I said, in order to show how very easily great genius, when the prime is passed, is turned aside to trifling: there are the stories of the wine-skin, of the companions turned by Circe to swine[1] (whom Zoïlus[2] called 'porkers in tears'), of Zeus fed by doves like a young bird[3], of Ulysses ten days without food on the wreck[4], there are the incredible details of the slaying of the Suitors[5]. What can we call these but in very truth 'dreams of Zeus'?[6] A second reason why the incidents of the

[1] *Od.* x. 17, &c; 229, &c.

[2] A grammarian of uncertain date, probably of the fourth century B.C. He was a bitter and malignant critic, and earned the name of 'Scourge of Homer'

[3] *Od.* xii. 62. [4] *Od.* xii, end. [5] *Od* xxii.

[6] Aristotle claims for Homer that he 'shows how lies should be told'; in other words, that he so manages the irrational, a potent element in the marvellous (*Poet.* c. xxiv), that the reader accepts it, feeling that if such things happened at all they would happen as they are described, and content to ask no questions. Horace, a warm and also a very discriminating admirer of Homer, after noticing the modest opening of the *Odyssey*, goes on to speak of these marvels:—

> Not smoke from fire his object is to bring,
> [illegible]
> He so contrives, that, when 'tis o'er, you see
> Beginning, middle, end alike agree.'
>
> *A. P.* 143, &c., Conington's translation.

If we assume a single author for the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, th conclusion that the *Odyssey* was the work of his old age is a ver natural one. A familiar instance of the tendency of great write

Odyssey also should be discussed is this; that you may recognize how the decline of passion in great writers and poets passes away into character-drawing: the sketches of the life in the household of Ulysses much resemble a comedy of character.

X

I WILL now ask you to consider with me whether we may possibly arrive at anything further, which has power to make our writings sublime. Since with all things are associated certain elements, constituents which are essentially inherent in the substance of each, one factor of sublimity must necessarily be the power of choosing the most vital of the included elements, and of making these, by mutual superposition, form, as it were a single body. On one side the hearer is attracted

towards the mythical spirit in their advancing years may be found in *Anne of Geierstein* (1829), of which Lockhart writes:—'The various play of fancy in the combination of persons and events, and the airy liveliness of both imagery and diction, may well justify us in applying to the author what he beautifully says of his King René:—

> A mirthful man he was; the snows of age
> Fell, but they did not chill him—Gaiety,
> Even in life closing, touch'd his teeming brain
> With such wild visions as the setting sun
> Raises in front of some hoar glacier,
> Painting the black ice with a thousand hues.'
>
> *Life of Sir W. Scott*, vol. vii.

On the relations of the *Odyssey* to the *Iliad* see the late Dr. D. B. Monro's *Odyssey* 13–24 (1901), Appendix, p. 289 foll., and, with special reference to this Treatise, p. 324 foll.

by the choice of ideas, on another by the accumulation of those which have been chosen. Thus Sappho, in all cases, takes the emotions incident to the frenzy of love from the attendant symptoms and from actual truth. But wherein does she show her great excellence? In her power of first selecting and then closely combining those which are conspicuous and intense:—

> Blest as the immortal gods is he
> The youth whose eyes may look on thee,
> Whose ears thy tongue's sweet melody
> May still devour.
>
> Thou smilest too!—sweet smile, whose charm
> Has struck my soul with wild alarm,
> And, when I see thee, bids disarm
> Each vital power.
>
> Speechless I gaze: the flame within
> Runs swift o'er all my quivering skin,
> My eyeballs swim; with dizzy din
> My brain reels round;
>
> And cold drops fall; and tremblings frail
> Seize every limb; and grassy pale
> I grow; and then—together fail
> Both sight and sound[1].

Do you not marvel how she seeks to gather soul and body into one, hearing and tongue, eyes and complexion,

[1] This ode of Sappho, the great woman-poet of Lesbos (about 600 B.C.), written in the metre which bears her name, has only been preserved to us in this treatise. It has been partly translated by Catullus into Latin, in the same metre. The version in the text is by J. Herman Merivale (1833). For another ode by the same author, which has only reached us through the critic Dionysius, see Appendix.

chose the expressions of real eminence, looking only to merit (if one may use the word), took them out clean, and placed them one upon another, introducing between them nothing trivial, or undignified, or low. For such things mar the whole effect, much as, in building, massive blocks, intended to cohere and hold together in one, are spoilt by stop-gaps and rubble[1].

XI

CLOSELY connected with the excellencies which I have named is that called Amplification; in which, when the facts and issues admit of several fresh beginnings and fresh halting-places, in periodic arrangement, great phrases come rolling upon others which have gone before, in a continuously ascending order. Whether this be done by way of enlarging upon commonplace topics, or of exaggeration, or of intensifying facts or reasoning, or of handling deeds done or suffering endured

[1] The words are difficult, and in their details uncertain; the rendering in the text is a paraphrase. With the general drift, the reader should compare chapters xxi, xl (end), xli (end). 'The walls of Messene, on the slopes of Mt. Ithome, are among the most perfect remains of Greek building in the Peloponnese, and are a beautiful example of Hellenic masonry during the best period. They are wholly built of neatly-dressed blocks, regularly bedded without mortar in horizontal courses.'—Smith's *Dict. Ant.*, 'Art. Murus.' On the other hand, Vitruvius (ii. 8) recommends the use of small stones as better preserving the mortar and concrete, which filled the interstices. A comparison between Greek masonry at its best and that of the Romans under the empire appears to bring out our author's point.

(for there are numberless varieties of amplification), the orator must in any case know that none of these can possibly stand by itself without sublimity as a perfect structure. The only exceptions are where pity o: depreciation are required; in all other processes o amplification, take away the sublime, and you will take soul out of body; they are effective no longer, and become nerveless and hollow unless braced by passage of sublimity. But, for clearness' sake, I must shortly lay down wherein the difference lies between my presen precepts, and what I said above (there I spoke of a sketch embracing the principal ideas and arranging then into one); and the broad difference between Amplificatio and Sublimity.

XII

I AM not satisfied with the definition given by the technical writers. Amplification is, they say, languag which invests the subject with greatness. Of cours this definition may serve in common for sublimity, and passion, and tropes, since they, too, invest the languag with greatness of a particular kind. To me it seem

this from rhetorical proof that the latter seeks to demonstrate the point required. . . .

[*Here about six pages have been lost.*]

In richest abundance, like a very sea, Plato often pours into an open expanse of grandeur. Hence it is, I think, that, if we look to style, the Orator, appealing more strongly to passions, has a large element of fire and of spirit aglow; Plato, calm in his stately and dignified magnificence, I will not say, is cold, but is not so intense[1]. It is on these and no other points, as it seems to me, dear Terentianus (that is, if we as Greeks are allowed to form an opinion), that Cicero and Demosthenes differ in their grand passages. Demosthenes' strength is in sheer height of sublimity, that of Cicero in its diffusion. Our countryman, because he burns and ravages all in his violence, swift, strong, terrible, may be compared to a lightning flash or a thunderbolt. Cicero, like a spreading conflagration, ranges and rolls over the whole field; the fire which burns is within him, plentiful and constant, distributed at his will now in one part, now in another, and fed with fuel in relays. These are points on which you can best judge: certainly the moment for the sublimity

[1] If a brilliant, but unsupported, conjecture of Bentley's should be right here, the passage would run:—'I will not say, is cold, but has not the same lightning flashes,' with which compare c. xxxiv (end). The conjecture, which involves a change or interchange of several vowels in the Greek word, has been approved by excellent scholars, but the point here is the *concentration* of Demosthenes, not, as on p. 34, his *brilliance*.

and tension of Demosthenes is where accumulated invective and strong passion are in play, and generally where the hearer is to be hard struck: the moment for diffusion is where he is to be flooded with detail, as it is always appropriate[1] in enlargement upon commonplaces, in perorations and digressions, and in all passages written for the style and for display, in scientific and physical exposition, and in several other branches of literature.

XIII

THAT Plato (to return to him) flowing 'in some such noiseless stream'[2], none the less reaches greatness, you will not fail to recognize, since you have read the *Republic*, and know this typical passage:— 'Those who are unversed in wisdom and virtue,' it runs, 'and spend all their days in feastings and the like, are borne downwards, and wander so through life. They never yet raised their eyes to the true world above them, nor were lifted up, nor tasted of solid or pure pleasure; but, like cattle, looking down, and bowed to earth and to the table, they feed and fill themselves and gender; and in the greediness of these desires they kick and butt one another with horns and hoofs of iron, and kill because they cannot be satisfied[3].'

This author shows us, if we would choose not to

[1] Plutarch (*Life of Demosthenes*, iii) severely blames Caecilius for venturing on a comparison of the two Orators, and quotes a proverb corresponding to one of our own about the whale and the elephant.
[2] A quotation from Plato (*Theaetetus*, p. 144).
[3] Plato, *Republic*, ix. 586 A.

neglect the lesson, that there is also another road, besides all that we have mentioned, which leads to the sublime. What, and what manner of road is that? Imitation and emulation of great writers and poets who have been before us. Here is our mark, my friend, let us hold closely to it: for many are borne along inspired by a breath which comes from another; even as the story is that the Pythian prophetess, approaching the tripod, where is a cleft in the ground, inhales, so they say, vapour sent by a god; and then and there, impregnated by the divine power, sings her inspired chants [1]; even so from the great genius of the men of old do streams pass off to the souls of those who emulate them, as though from holy caves; inspired by which, even those not too highly susceptible to the god are possessed by the greatness which was in others.

Was Herodotus alone 'most Homeric'? There was Stesichorus [2] before him, and Archilochus; but, more than any, Plato drew into himself from that Homeric fountain countless runlets and channels of water. (Perhaps we ought to have given examples, had not Ammonius [3] drawn up a selection under headings.)

[1] The author follows the same account of the Pythian oracle as Strabo (ix. 419); but Plutarch, who lived on the spot, makes no mention of the mephitic vapour, and indeed uses words (*De defectu Orac.* c. xlii) incompatible with its existence. For the bearing of this passage upon the date of the treatise see Introduction.

[2] Stesichorus, an early poet (about 600 B.C.) of Himera.

[3] Ammonius, a disciple of Aristarchus, the great Alexandrian critic, who wrote on words borrowed by Plato from Homer (not, as was formerly thought, Ammonius Saccas, a teacher of Cassius Longinus).

Here is no theft, but such a rendering as is made from beautiful spectacles or from carvings or other works of art. I do not think that there would be such a bloom as we find on some of his philosophical dogmas, or that he could have entered so often into poetical matter and expressions, unless he had entered for the first place against Homer, aye, with all his soul, a young champion against one long approved; and striven for the mastery, too emulously perhaps and in the spirit of the lists, yet not without his reward; for 'good,' says Hesiod, 'is this strife for mortals.' Yes, that contest for fame is fair, and its crown worthy of the winning, wherein even to be defeated by our forerunners is not inglorious[1].

XIV

THEREFORE even we, when we are working out a theme which requires lofty speech and greatness of thought, do well to imagine within ourselves how, if need were, Homer would have said this same thing, how Plato or Demosthenes, or, in history, Thucydides would have made it sublime. The figures of those great men will meet us on the way while we vie with them, they will stand out before

[1] 'In a word, Homer fills his readers with sublime ideas, and, I believe, has raised the imagination of all the good poets that have come after him. I shall *only* instance Horace, who immediately takes fire at the first hint of any passage from the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, and always rises above himself when he has Homer in view.' *Spectator*, no. 417 (Addison); see also no. 339.

Then he goes on :—

> Right for the seven Pleiads shape thy course :
> So spake the sire ; the son now grasped the reins,
> And lashed the flanks of those winged coursers. They,
> Set free, sped onwards through th' expanse of air :
> The sire, astride great Sirius [1] in the rear,
> Rode, and the boy instructed :—thither drive !
> Here wheel thy car, yea here ! [2]

Would you not say that the soul of the writer treads the car with the driver, and shares the peril, and wears wings, as the horses do ; such details could never have been imagined by it, if it had not moved in that heavenly display, and kept even pace. So in his Cassandra [3], 'Ho, ye horse loving Trojans . . .'

Now, whereas Aeschylus hazards the most heroic flights of imagination, as where the Seven chieftains against Thebes, in the play of that name :—

> Seven impetuous warriors, captains bold,
> Slaying the sacred bull o'er black-rimm'd shields
> And touching with their hands the victim's gore,
> Ares, Enyo, and blood-thirsting Fear
> Invoked, and swear . . . [4]

swearing to one another oaths of death, each man of his own, with 'no word of ruth [5]' ; yet sometimes produces thoughts which are not wrought out, but left in

[1] So the MS. An alteration is suggested which gives the sense of 'a trace-horse'. Either image is sufficiently extravagant.

[2] From the *Phaethon*, a lost play of Euripides (Nauck 779).

[3] From another lost play, perhaps the *Alexander*, in which Cassandra figured.

[4] Aeschylus, *Seven against Thebes*, 42. Swanwick's tr.

[5] Line 51 of the same play.

the rough, and harsh; Euripides in emulation forces himself upon the same perils. Thus in Aeschylus the palace of Lycurgus is troubled by the Gods in a manner passing strange when Dionysus is made manifest:—

> See how the palace is possessed, its halls
> Are all a revel . . .

Euripides has smoothed this over and worded it differently:—

> And all the mountain joined their revelry[1].

Sophocles has used imagination finely about the dying Oedipus[2], when he passes to his own burial amidst elemental portents; and again where Achilles, as the Greeks are sailing away, appears to them above his tomb, just when they were standing out to sea[3], an appearance which no one has expressed with more vivid imagery than Simonides[4]; but it is impossible to put down all instances. We may, however, say generally, that those found in poets admit an excess which passes into the mythical and goes beyond all that is credible; in rhetorical imagination that which has in it reality and truth is always best. Deviations from this rule become strange and exotic when the texture of the speech is poetic and mythical, and passes into

[1] Euripides, *Bacchae*, 726. The line of Aeschylus is from a lost tetralogy, or set of four plays, called the *Lycurgeia*.

[2] Sophocles, *Oedipus Coloneus*, 1586, &c.

[3] The reference may be to the *Polyxena*, a lost play of Sophocles.

[4] Simonides of Ceos, 556–467 B.C., a great lyric and elegiac poet.

impossibility of every sort; surely we need look no further than to our own clever orators, who, like tragedians, see Furies, and cannot, honest gentlemen, learn so much as this, that when Orestes says:—

> Unhand me; one of my own Furies thou;
> Dost grasp my waist, to thrust me down to hell?[1]

he imagines all this because he is mad. What then can imagination in rhetoric do? It can probably contribute much else to our speeches in energy and passion; but certainly in passages dealing with facts an admixture of it not only persuades a listener, but makes him its slave. 'Now mark me,' says Demosthenes, 'if at this very moment a cry should be heard in front of our courts, and then one said that the prison has been opened, and the prisoners are escaping, there is no one, be he old or young, so careless but will help all he can. But if one were to come forward and say, that the man who released them is now before you, that man would have no hearing, and would instantly die[2].' So Hyperides when put on his trial, because he had proposed, after our defeat, to make the slaves free; 'This proposal,' he said, 'was moved not by the Orator, but by the battle at Chaeroneia[3]'; here, while he deals with the facts, he at the same time has used imagination,

[1] Euripides, *Orestes*, 264.

[2] Demosthenes, *Timocrates*, 208.

[3] Hyperides, a great Athenian orator, on whom see p. 62. Plutarch tells us that he was accused of 'illegality' after the disaster of Chaeroneia, and pleaded 'the arms of the Macedonians made darkness in my eyes,' and 'it was the fight at Chaeroneia, not I, made that proposal.'

the audacity of the conception has borne him outside and beyond persuasion. In all such instances it is a fact of nature that we listen to that which is strongest. We are therefore drawn away from mere demonstration to that which has in it imagination and surprise, the element of fact being wrapped and lost amid the light which shines around it. This process is only what we might expect; when two forces are combined in one, the stronger always attracts into itself the potency of the other.

What I have now written about the sublime effects which belong to high thoughts, and which are produced by the greatness of man's soul, and secondarily by imitation, or by imagination, will suffice [1].

XVI

HERE comes the place reserved for Figures [2], our next topic; for these, if handled as they ought to be, should, as I said, form no minor element

[1] Some words may have been lost here.

[2] The 'Figures,' partly of words, partly of thoughts (see p. 13) were idols of the rhetoricians, who nearly all wrote treatises upon them. The bondage in which the orators stood to these 'Figures' is well shown in a story preserved by Seneca (Controv III, Introduction). Albucius, an excellent but anxious and self-critical member of the Roman bar, was chased out of the profession by the unfortunate results of his use of a single figure, the Omotic. The other side had proposed to settle a certain matter by a form of oath. 'Swear,' replied Albucius, intending by the figure to disclose all his opponent's iniquities, 'but I will prescribe the oath, Swear by the ashes of your father, which lie unburied. Swear by

in greatness. As however it would be a laborious, or rather an unlimited task to give an accurate enumeration of all, we will go through a few of those productive of greatness of speech, in order to make good my assertion, and will begin thus. Demosthenes is offering a demonstration in defending his public acts[1]. Now what was the natural way to deal with it? 'You made no mistake, men of Athens, when you took upon yourselves the struggle for the freedom of the Greeks: you have examples of this near home. For they also made no mistake who fought at Marathon, at Salamis, at Plataea.' But when, as one suddenly inspired and possessed, he breaks out with that oath by the bravest men of Greece: '*It cannot be that you made a mistake; no, by those who bore the brunt at Marathon,*' he appears by use of a single figure, that of adjuration (which here I call apostrophe), to have deified those ancestors; suggesting the thought that we ought to swear, as by gods, by men who died so; and implanting in the judges the spirit of the men who there hazarded their

the memory of your father!' He finished his period, and rose. L. Aruntius for the other side, said: 'We accept your proposal, my client will swear.' 'I made no proposal,' shouted Albucius, 'I employed a figure.' Aruntius insisted—the court began to fidget. Albucius continued to protest that, at that rate, the Figures were ruled out of the Universe. 'Rule them out,' said Aruntius, 'we shall be able to live without them.' The court took his view, and Albucius never opened his mouth in public again. I owe the reference to this good story to Prof. Saintsbury, in whose *History of Literary Criticism*, vol. i, will be found much mention of the 'Figures.'

[1] *De Corona*, 208.

lives of old; changing the very nature of demonstration into sublimity and passion of the highest order, and the assured conviction of new and more than natural oaths; and, withal, infusing into the souls of his hearers a plea of sovereign and specific virtue; that so, relieved by the medicine of his words of praise, they should be brought to pride themselves no less on the battle against Philip than on the triumphs won at Marathon and at Salamis. Doing all this, he caught his hearers up and bore them with him, by his use of a figure.

It is said, I know, that the germ of this oath is found in Eupolis[1]:—

> I swear by Marathon, the fight, my fight,
> No man of them unscathed shall vex my heart.

But then it is not the mere swearing by a name which is great; place, manner, occasion, purpose are all essential. In these lines there is an oath, and that is all; it is addressed to Athenians when prosperous and needing no comfort; besides the poet has not made immortals of the men, and sworn by them, that so he may implant within the hearts of his hearers a worthy record of their valour; he has passed away from the men who bore the brunt to the inanimate thing, the battle. In Demosthenes the oath has been framed to suit beaten men, that so Chaeronea might appear a failure no longer; it is, as I said, at once a demonstration that they made no mistake, an example, an

[1] Eupolis, Athenian poet of the Old Comedy, contemporary of Aristophanes. The lines are from the *Demus*.

assurance resting on oaths, a word of praise, an exhortation. And whereas the orator was liable to be met by this objection: 'You are speaking of a defeat under your administration, and yet you swear by victories,' in the next words he squares his phrase by rule, and makes his very words safe, giving us a lesson that 'even in Bacchic transports we must yet be sober[1].' 'By those who bore the brunt,' are his words, 'at Marathon, by those who fought on sea by Salamis and off Artemisium, by those who stood in the ranks at Plataea!' Nowhere does he say 'who conquered,' but throughout he has furtively kept back the word which should give the result, because that result was a happy one, the contrary to that of Chaeroneia. Therefore he gives his hearer no time, and at once adds:—'To all of whom the city gave public burial, Aeschines, not to those only who succeeded.'

XVII

AT this point I must not omit, my dear friend, to state one of my own conclusions. It shall be given quite concisely, and is this. As though by nature, the figures ally themselves with sublimity, and in turn are marvellously supported by the alliance. Where and how this is so, I will explain. There is a peculiar prejudice against a promiscuous use of the figures: it suggests a suspicion of ambuscade, plot, sophistry; and the more so when the speech is addressed to a judge with absolute powers, above all

[1] Adapted, and partly quoted, from Euripides, *Bacchae*, 317.

to tyrants, kings, magistrates of the highest rank: any of these at once becomes indignant, if he feels that there is an attempt to outwit him, like a silly child, by the paltry figure of a skilled orator; he takes the fallacy to be used in contempt for himself, and either rages like a wild beast, or, if he master his wrath, yet is wholly disinclined to be convinced by the arguments. Accordingly a figure is best, when the very fact that it is a figure passes unnoticed. Therefore sublimity and passion are a help against the suspicion attaching to the use of figures, and a resource of marvellous power; because the treacherous art, being once associated with what is beautiful and great, enters and remains, without exciting the least suspicion. This is sufficiently proved in the words quoted above, 'By the men who fought at Marathon!' By what device has the orator concealed the figure? Clearly, by its very light. Much as duller lights are extinguished in the encircling beams of the sun, so the artifices of rhetoric are obscured by the grandeur poured about them. An effect not far removed from this occurs in painting. When colours are used, and the light and the shadow lie upon the same surface beside one another, the light meets the eye before the shadow, and seems not only more prominent, but also much nearer. So it is in speeches, sublimity and passion, lying closer to our souls, always come into view sooner than the figures, because of what I may call natural kinship, and also of brilliance: the artfulness of the figures is thrown into shadow, and, as it were, veiled.

XVIII

WHAT are we to say of the Questions and Interrogations[1], which come next? Is it not true that, by the very form which this figure takes, our orator gives intensity to his language and makes it much more effective and vehement? 'Or do ye wish (answer me, sir!) to go round and inquire one of another: "is there any news?" What can be greater news than this, that a man of Macedonia is subduing Greece? Is Philip dead? Not dead, Heaven knows, but sick. What matter to you? if anything happen to him, you will quickly make you another Philip[2].' Again, 'Let us sail to Macedonia. "What harbour shall we ever find to put into?" asked some one. War will discover for itself the weak points in Philip's resources[3].' The thing put simply would be quite inadequate: as it is, the rush and swift return of question and answer, and the meeting of his own difficulty as if it came from another, make the words not only more sublime by his use of the figure, but actually more convincing. For passionate language is more attractive when it seems to be born of the occasion, rather than deliberately adopted by the speaker: question and answer carried on with a man's self reproduce the spontaneity of passion. Much as those who are questioned by others, when spurred by

[1] As all the examples are of Question *and Answer* it seems not improbable that one of the two substantives has replaced the word 'Answers' in the original.

[2] *Philippic*, i. 10. [3] *Id.* i. 44.

the sudden appeal, meet the point vigorously and with the plain truth, so it is with the figure of question and answer; it draws the hearer off till he thinks that each point in the inquiry has been raised and put into words without preparation, and so imposes upon him. Again (for the instance from Herodotus has passed for one of the most sublime), if it be thus . . .

[Here about six pages have been lost.]

XIX

THE words drop unconnected, and are, so to say, poured forth, almost too fast for the speaker himself. 'Locking their shields,' says Xenophon, 'they pushed, fought, slew, died[1].' Or take the words of Eurylochus in Homer:—

> E'en as thou bad'st, we ranged the thickets through,
> We found a house fair fashioned in a glade[2].

Phrases cut off from one another, yet spoken rapidly, carry the *impression of a struggle, where the meaning* is at once checked and hurried on. Such an effect Homer has produced by his Asyndeta.

XX

AN excellent and stirring effect is often given by the concurrence of figures, when two or three mingled in one company throw into a common fund their force, cogency, beauty. Thus in the speech

[1] Xenophon, *Hist.* iv. 3. 19. [2] *Od.* x. 251

against Midias[1] we have Asyndeta interwoven with repetitions and vivid presentation. 'There are many things which the striker might do, yet some of which the person struck could never tell another, by gesture, by look, by voice.' Then, in order that the passage may not continue travelling in the same track (for rest shows calm, disarrangement passion, which is a rush and a stirring of the mind), he passes with a bound to fresh Asyndeta and to repetitions: 'by gesture, by look, by voice; when in insult, when in enmity, when with fists, when as slave.' In these phrases the orator does what the striker did, he belabours the intellect of the judges by the speed of blow following blow. Then he goes back from this point, and makes a fresh onset, as gusts of wind do; 'when with fists, when on the face,' he goes on, 'these things stir, these make men frantic, to whom insult is not familiar. No one by telling of these things could possibly represent their atrocity.'

Thus he keeps up in essence throughout the passage his repetitions and Asyndeta, while he continually varies them; so that his order is disorderly, and again his violation of order has in it order of a kind.

XXI

NOW insert, if you will, conjunctions, as the school of Isocrates does: 'Again we must not omit this point either, that there are many things which the striker might do, first by gesture, and then by look,

[1] *Midias*, 72.

and yet further by his very voice[1]: if you rewrite the passage in full sequence, you will recognize how the press and rough effectiveness of passion, when smoothed to one level by conjunctions, fails to pierce the ear, and its fire at once goes out. For as, if one should tie up the limbs of runners, their speed is gone, so passion chafes to be shackled by conjunctions and other additions. The freedom of running is destroyed, and the momentum as of bolt from catapult.

XXII

UNDER the same head we must set cases of Hyperbaton. This is a disturbance of the proper sequence of phrases or thoughts, and is the surest impress of vehement passion. For as those who are really angry, or in fear, or indignant, or who fall under the influence of jealousy or any other passion (for passions are many, nay countless, past the power of man to reckon), are seen to put forward one set of ideas, then spring aside to another, thrusting in a parenthesis out of all logic, then wheel round to the first, and in their excitement, like a ship before an unsteady gale, drag phrases and thoughts sharply across, now this way, now that, and so divert the natural order into turnings innumerable; so is it in the best writers: imitation of nature leads them by way of Hyperbata to the effects of nature. For art is perfect just when it seems to be nature, and nature successful when the art underlies it unnoticed. Take the speech of Dionysius of Phocaea in Herodotus[1]:—'Our fortunes

[1] Herodotus, vi. 11.

rest on the edge of a razor, O Ionians, whether we are to be free or slaves, aye runaway slaves. Now, therefore, if you choose to take up hardships, there is toil for you in the present, but you will be able to overcome your enemies.' The natural order was, 'O Ionians, now is the time for you to accept toils, for our fortunes rest on the edge of a razor.' He has transposed the words 'Men of Ionia,' starting at once with the mention of the fear, and entirely omitting, in view of the pressing terror, to find time to name his audience. Then he has inverted the order of the thoughts. Before saying that they must endure toil (which is the point of his exhortation) he first assigns the cause why they should do so: 'our fortunes', he says, 'rest on the edge of a razor': so that his words seem not to have been prepared, but to be forced out of him. Even more marvellous is Thucydides in the skill with which he separates, by the use of Hyperbata, things which nature has made one and inseparable. Demosthenes is not so arbitrary as he; yet he is never tired of the use of this figure in all its applications; the effect of vehemence which he produces by transposition is great, and also that of speaking on the call of the moment; besides all this he draws his hearers with him to face the hazards of his long Hyperbata. For he often leaves suspended the thought with which he began, and interposes, as though he struck into a train of reasoning foreign to it and dissimilar, matter which he rolls upon other matter, all drawn from some source outside, till he strikes his hearer with fear that an entire collapse of the sentence will follow, and forces him by

there are cases where plurals fall on the ear with g
effect, and catch our applause by the effect of mul
which the number gives. Take an instance
Sophocles in the *Oedipus*[1]:—

> O marriage rites
> That gave me birth, and having borne me, gave
> To me in turn an offspring, and ye showed
> Fathers and sons, and brothers, all in one,
> Mothers and wives, and daughters, hateful names,
> All foulest deeds that men have ever done.

All these express one name, Oedipus, and on other side Jocasta; but for all that, the number, spre out into plurals, has made the misfortunes plural also or in another case of many for one: 'Forth He issued and Sarpedons[2].' And there is the passage Plato, which I have quoted also in another place, the Athenians[3]:—

'No Pelopses, nor Cadmuses, nor Aegyptuses, n Danai, nor other of the natural-born barbarian dwelt here with us; pure Greeks with no cross of blood are we that dwell in the land,' and so forth. F things strike on the ear with more sonorous effect when the names are thus piled upon one another in groups. Yet this should be done in those cases alone where the subject admits of enlargement, or multiplication, or hyperbole, or passion, either one of these, or several: for we know that to go everywhere 'hung about with bells' is a sophist's trick indeed[4].

[1] *Oedipus Tyrannus*, 1403. [2] Unknown.

[3] *Menexenus*, 245 D.

[4] 'Other men take their misfortunes quietly, he hangs out b

XXIV

YET, on the other hand, contraction from plural to singular sometimes produces an effect conspicuously sublime. 'Then all Peloponnesus was ranged on different sides,' says the Orator[1]. And look at this, 'when Phrynichus exhibited his drama, the *Taking of Miletus*, the whole theatre fell into tears[2].' Where separate individuals are compressed into unity the notion of a single body is produced. In both cases the cause of the ornamental effect is the same: where terms are properly singular, to turn them into plurals shows emotion into which the speaker is surprised; where plural, to bring several individuals under one sonorous head is a change in the opposite direction, and equally unexpected.

XXV

AGAIN, where you introduce things past and done as happening in the actual present, you will make your account no longer a narrative but a living action. 'A man who has fallen under the horse of Cyrus,' says Xenophon[3], 'and is being trampled, strikes his sword into the belly of the horse: the horse plunges and unseats Cyrus, and he falls.' So Thucydides in most instances.

in his daily life a next thing to it.'—Demosthenes, *Aristogeiton*, i, 90.

[1] *De Corona*, 18.

[2] Herodotus vi. 21. The words used in the translation are taken from Herodotus. Our treatise has 'the spectators burst into tears,' by which the point of the 'figure' is missed.

[3] *Cyropaedeia*, vii. i. 37.

XXVI

EFFECTIVE also in the same way is the transposition of persons, which often makes a hearer think that he is moving in the midst of the dangers described:—

> Of toughest kind
> Thou wouldst have called those hosts, so manfully
> Each fought with each [1].

And Aratus [2] has:—

> Not in that month may seas about thee surge!

In much the same way Herodotus: 'You will sail up stream from the city Elephantina, and then you will come to a level plain. Passing through this tract, you will again embark on another and sail for two days; then you will reach a great city, whose name is Meroe [3].' You see, comrade, how he takes your spirit with him through the place, and turns hearing into seeing. All such passages, being addressed to the reader in his own person, make him take his place at the very centre of the action. Again, when you speak as though to a single individual, not to all:—

> Nor of the son of Tydeus couldst thou know
> If he with Trojans or Achaians were [4];

you will render him more moved by the passions and also more attentive; he is filled full of the combat, because he is roused by being himself addressed.

[1] *Il.* xv. 697.
[2] *Phaenomena*, 287 (see above on p. 25).
[3] ii. 29.
[4] *Il.* v. 85.

XXVII

THEN there are other cases where the writer is giving a narrative about a person, and by a sudden transition himself passes into that person; in this class there is an outburst of passion:—

> But Hector warned the Trojans with loud cry,
> To rush upon the ships, and pass the plunder by:
> 'But whom elsewhere than at the ships I sight,
> Death shall be his that moment[1].'

Here the poet has assigned the narrative part to himself, as is fitting: the sharp threat he has suddenly, without previous explanation, attached to the angry chieftain: it would have been cold had he inserted 'Hector then said so and so,' whereas now the change of construction has anticipated the poet's change of speaker.

Hence the proper use of the figure is where the occasion is short and sharp, and does not allow the writer to stop, but forces him to hurry from person to person, as in Hecataeus[2]: 'Ceyx, indignant at this, at once commanded the Heraclidae of the later generation to leave the country: "for I have no power to help you; therefore, that you may not perish yourselves, and inflict a wound on me, depart to another people."' Demosthenes, in his *Aristogeiton* speech[3], has found

[1] *Il.* xv. 346–9.

[2] Hecataeus of Miletus (living about B.C. 520), historian and geographer.

[3] *Aristogeiton*, i. 27.

ifferent method to throw passion and swiftness into
s change of persons: 'And will none of you be
und,' he says, 'to entertain wrath or indignation at
e violence of this shameless miscreant; who, thou
oulest of mankind, when thy effrontery is stopped,
not by barriers nor by gates, such as man might open
——' He has not finished what he intended, but pass-
ing quickly aside, and, I had almost said, splitting a
single sentence between two persons, because he is so
angry—'Who, thou foulest of mankind,' he says;
with the result that, having turned his speech away
from Aristogeiton, and having done with him, you
think, he directs it upon him again with far more
intensity through the passion.

Much in the same way Penelope:—

What brings thee, herald, thee, the pioneer
Of these imperious suitors? Do they send
To bid the servants of my husband dear
Of their appointed task-work to make end,
And on their lordly revelries attend?
Never elsewhere may they survive to meet!
Here in these halls, while our estates they rend,
May they their latest and their last now eat,
Who thus with outrage foul Telemachus entreat.
Ye to your parents heedful ear lend none,
Nor hearken how Odysseus lived of yore[1].

[1] *Od.* iv. 681.

XXVIII

NO one I think would be in doubt as to Periphrasis being a factor of sublimity. For as in music Paraphones make the principal melody sweeter[1], so Periphrasis often chimes in with the plain expression, and the concurrence adds to the beauty, more especially if it have not any windy, unmusical effect, but be pleasantly compounded. In proof of this it will be sufficient to quote Plato at the beginning of the Funeral Speech[2]:—'Of all that we can give, these have now what is rightly theirs, and, having received it, they pass on their appointed journey, escorted publicly by the city, personally each man by those of his kin.' Here he has called death an 'appointed journey,' and the bestowal of the usual rites 'a public escort given by their country.' Is the dignity added to the thought by these turns but a small matter? Or has he rather taken language plain and unadorned, and made it melodious by pouring around it the harmonies which came of periphrasis? Xenophon again:—'Ye reckon toil to be the guide to happy life, and have received it

[1] Paraphones. The musical term is an obscure one. It has been suggested that our author means to contrast the rich effect of a chord with the thinner sound of a single note, and thus to illustrate, through the notion of musical accompaniment, the relation of a periphrasis to a single word or phrase. The phrase has been sometimes identified with Cicero's 'falsae voculae' (*de Orat.* iii. 98). See the authorities quoted in the Appendix.

[2] *Menexenus*, 236 D.

into your souls as the fairest and the most *gallant* of all possessions: for ye take more delight in being praised than in any other thing[1].' By calling toil 'the guide to happy life,' and giving a like expansion to the other points, he has attached to his words of praise a great and definite thought. *And that inimitable phrase of* Herodotus:—'On those of the Scythians who plundered the temple the goddess sent a plague which made them women.'[2]

XXIX

YET Periphrasis is exposed to special risks, more special than any of the figures, if used by a writer without sense of proportion: for it falls feebly on the ear, and savours of trifling and of rank stupidity. So when Plato, (for he always employs the figure with great force, occasionally out of season,) says in the *Laws*[3]: 'we must not allow wealth, either of silver or of gold, to be established in the city and settle there,' mocking critics say that, if he had wanted to forbid them to possess sheep, he would clearly have talked of 'wealth of sheep and wealth of cattle[4].'

Enough however of this disquisition (which came in by way of parenthesis) on the use of figures in producing sublime effects, all those which we have *men-*

[1] *Cyropaedia*, i. 5. 12. [2] i. 105. [3] *Laws*, vii. 80. 1.

[4] It has been pointed out by Dr. Verrall (*Class. Rev.* xix. p. 203) that the writer ignores the fact that Plato is avowedly quoting from poetry. (See Introduction.)

tioned make speeches more passionate and stirring; and passion is as large an ingredient in sublimity as sense of character in an agreeable style.

XXX

NEXT, since the thought and the diction of a speech are in most cases mutually interlaced, I will ask you to consider with me whether any particulars of what concerns expression still remain. That a choice of the right words and of grand words wonderfully attracts and charms hearers—that this stands very high as a point of practice with all orators and all writers, because, of its own inherent virtue, it brings greatness, beauty, raciness, weight, strength, mastery, and an exultation all its own, to grace our words, as though they were the fairest statues—that it imparts to mere facts a soul which has speech—it may perhaps be superfluous to set out at length, for my readers know it. For beautiful words are, in a real and special sense, the light of thought. Yet their majesty is not of service in all places: to apply to trifling details grand and solemn words would appear much the same as if one were to fasten a large tragic mask upon a little child[1]. Yet in poetry . . .

[*Here about twelve pages have been lost.*]

[1] The same figure is used by Quintilian (vi. 1. 36).

XXXI

. . . very rich and pithy; and this of Anacreon[1]:—

The Thracian filly has no more my care.

So too the novel phrase of Theopompus[2] has merit, from the closeness of the correspondence it appears to me most expressive, yet Caecilius has strangely found fault with it. 'Philip,' he says, 'has a rare power of swallowing down facts perforce.' So vulgar idiom is sometimes much more expressive than ornamental language; it is recognized at once as a touch of common life; and what is familiar is on the way to be credible. Therefore, when applied to a man who patiently puts up with and enjoys what is mean and repulsive in order to better himself, the phrase adopted, 'to swallow down perforce,' is very telling. So in Herodotus[3]:—'Then Cleomenes went mad, and cut his own flesh with the knife into little strips, until he had made collops of himself and so died.' And 'Pythes held on to his ship and fought until he was chopped to pieces[4].' These scrape the corner of vulgar idiom, but they are not vulgar because they are so expressive.

[1] Anacreon of Teos, a lyric poet who died about B.C. 478. Most of the well-known poems which bear his name are spurious.

[2] Theopompus, an historian of Chios, born about B.C. 378. see p. 75.

[3] vi. 75. [4] vii. 181.

XXXII

As to number of Metaphors, Caecilius appears to agree with those who lay down a rule allowing two, or at the most three, applied to the same object. About such figures again Demosthenes is the true standard, and the time for their use is, when passions are driven onwards like a torrent, and draw with themselves, as necessary to the passage, the multiplication of metaphors.

'Men foul and flatterers,' he says, 'having mutilated their fatherlands, every one of them, having pledged away their freedom in wine, first to Philip, now to Alexander, measuring happiness by their belly and by the appetites which are most shameful, having thrown to the ground that freedom and that life without a master, wherein the Greeks of old found their very standard and definition of good[1].' Here the orator's wrath against the traitors screens the number of the metaphors used. Accordingly Aristotle and Theophrastus[2] say that bold metaphors are softened by such devices as the insertion of 'as though,' and 'as it were,' and 'if I may speak thus,' and 'if I am right in using somewhat venturesome phrase'; for 'censure,' they say, 'cures bold expression.' For myself, I accept all these; yet I affirm, as I said in speaking of figures, that bursts of passion, being seasonable and

[1] *De Corona*, 296

[2] Theophrastus, of Lesbos, Aristotle's successor as head of the Peripatetic School at Athens.

vehement, and sublimity when genuine, are sure specifics for numerous and daring metaphors; because as they surge and sweep, they naturally draw everything their own way, and force it onwards, rather, I would say, they require and exact bold metaphors, and do not allow the hearer leisure to go into questions of their number, because the speaker's excitement is his. Yet further, in speeches about commonplaces and in set descriptions, nothing is so expressive as continued and successive tropes. It is by means of these that in Xenophon[1] the anatomy of man's bodily tabernacle is painted with so much magnificence, and still more admirably in Plato[2]. The head he calls the citadel; between this and the chest an isthmus has been constructed, the neck, to which vertebrae have been attached like hinges; pleasure is a bait tempting men to their hurt, and the tongue supplies the test of taste; the heart is the knot of the veins, and the fountain of the blood which courses violently around, is appointed to be the guard-house. The passages or pores he calls lanes. 'For the beating of the heart, in the expectation of danger or on the summons of wrath, because it is a fiery organ, they devised a resource, introducing the structure of the lungs, which are soft and bloodless, and perforated with cavities like a sponge, in order that, when wrath boils up within it, the heart may beat upon a yielding substance, and so receive no hurt.' The chamber where the appetites dwell he styled the women's chamber, that where the passions, the men's

[1] *Memorabilia*, i. 4. 5. [2] *Timaeus*, 69 D.

chamber. The spleen is a napkin for the parts within; filled with their purgings it grows large and unsound. 'After this,' he goes on, 'they enshrouded all with fleshy parts, placing the flesh in front, to be a protection from matter outside, like layers of felt.' He called blood the food of the fleshy parts. 'And for the sake of nourishment they made water-courses through the body, like water-courses cut in gardens, that the currents of the veins might run as from an inflowing stream, the body being a narrow canal.' But when the end is at hand, he says that the cables of the souls are loosed, as though of a ship, and it is let go free. Countless similar details follow: those which we have set down suffice to show how grand in their nature tropical expressions are, and how metaphors produce sublimity, and that impassioned and descriptive passages admit them most readily. Yet that the use of tropes, like all other beauties of style, leads writers on to neglect proportion, is clear without my saying it. For it is upon these especially that critics pull Plato to pieces, he is so often led on, as though his style were possessed, into untempered and harsh metaphors and portentous allegory. 'For it is not easy to realize,' he says, 'that a city ought to be mixed like a cup, whereinto wine is poured and boils, yet, when chastened by another and a temperate god, in that fair partnership forms an honest and a sober draught.' For to call water 'a temperate god,' they say, and admixture 'chastening,' is the mark of a poet who is anything but sober. Caecilius however, taking up such weak points

as this in his pamphlets in praise of Lysias[1], actually dared to make out Lysias better all round than Plato, mixing up two different feelings: for loving Lysias more than he loved himself, he yet hates Plato more thoroughly than he loves Lysias. Only he is carried away by combativeness, nor are his premisses admitted as he thought them to be. For he puts forward his orator as without a fault and clear in his record, as against Plato who had made many mistakes. The fact is not so, nor anything like it.

XXXIII

COME now: let us find some writer who is really clear and beyond criticism. Upon this point, is it not worth while to raise the question in a general form, whether in poems and prose writings a greatness with some failings is the better, or a genius which is limited in its successes, but is always sound and never drops? Aye, and this further question; whether the first prize should be carried off by the most numerous excellences in literature or by the greatest? These questions are germane to the subject of Sublimity, and absolutely require a decision. I know, for my own part,

[1] Attic orator (about B.C. 459–380). 'His distinctive qualities are a delicate mastery of the purest Attic, a subtle power of expressing character, a restrained sense of humour, and a certain flexibility of mind which enables him under the most diverse circumstances to write with almost unfailing tact and charm with that χάρις . . . which the old critics felt in him.'—Prof. Sir R. C. Jebb, *Selections from Attic Orators*, p. 186.

that genius of surpassing greatness has always the least clear record. Precision in every detail comes perilously near littleness; in great natures, as in great fortunes, there ought to be something which may even be neglected. Further, this may perhaps be a necessary law, that humble or modest genius, which never runs a risk, and never aims at excellence, remains in most cases without a failure and in comparative safety; but that what is great is hazardous by very reason of the greatness. Not that I fail to recognize this second law, that all human things are more easily recognized on their worse side; that the memory of failures remains indelible, while that of the good points passes quickly away. I have myself brought forward not a few failures in Homer and in others of the very greatest, yet never take pleasure in their slips, which I do not call voluntary mistakes, but rather oversights caused by the random, haphazard carelessness of great genius, and passed unmarked by it; and I remain unshaken in my opinion, that in all cases great excellence, although not kept up to one level throughout, should always bear off first award, if for nothing else, yet for the sake of simple intellectual greatness. To take an instance, Apollonius in the *Argonautae*[1] is a poet who never drops, and Theocritus[2] in his *Pastorals* is most successful, except as to a few extraneous matters: now

[1] Apollonius of Rhodes (born about B.C. 235), an Alexandrian poet, to whom Virgil is much indebted.

[2] Theocritus, the great pastoral poet, living at Syracuse about 280 B.C.

this being so, would you not rather be Homer than Apollonius? Take again Eratosthenes[1] in the *Erigone*, a little poem with nothing in it to blame; is he a greater poet than Archilochus[2], who drags much ill-arranged matter along in that outpouring of divine inspiration which it is difficult to range under a law? In lyrics again, would you choose to be Bacchylides[3] rather than Pindar, in Tragedy Ion of Chios than Sophocles himself?[4] These poets no doubt never drop, their language is always smooth and the writing beautiful, whereas Pindar and Sophocles at one time set all ablaze in their rush, but the fire is quenched when you least expect it, and they fail most unhappily. Am I not right in saying that no man in his senses, if he put the works of Ion together in a row, would value them against a single play, the *Oedipus*?[5]

[1] Eratosthenes of Cyrene. A great astronomer and scientific geographer, born about B.C. 276. He also wrote on Homer and on the Old Attic Comedy. Nothing else is known of this 'faultless poem,' but he is said to have been a pupil of Callimachus, and to have written an astronomical poem, *Hermes*.

[2] Archilochus, see above, p. 25.

[3] Bacchylides of Ceos, a lyric poet, contemporary with Pindar, and his rival. His works, other than mere fragments, have been known to us since 1897, when they were published by Dr. F. G. Kenyon from a recently discovered Egyptian papyrus. Interesting as they are, the judgement of our critic as to their relative poetic value, is confirmed.

[4] Ion of Chios, a tragic poet of considerable merit, contemporary with Sophocles: he attempted literature in almost all its branches, and was famous as an anecdotist.

[5] With this judgement on Sophocles, which comes to us as something of a surprise, compare Plutarch (*On hearing poëts*, c. xiii),

XXXIV

IF successful passages were to be numbered, not weighed, Hyperides[1] would, on this reckoning, far surpass Demosthenes. He sounds more notes[2], and has more points of excellence; he wins a second place in pretty well every competition, like the hero of the Pentathlon, being beaten for the first prize by some trained competitor in each, but standing first of the non-professionals. Hyperides certainly, besides matching the successful points in Demosthenes, always excepting composition, has included, over and above these, the virtues and graces of Lysias. He talks with simplicity, when it is required, not in a sustained monotonous manner like Demosthenes, and he shows sense of character, a flavouring added with a light hand; he has indescribable graces, the wit of a man who knows life, good breeding, irony with readiness of fence, jokes not vulgar nor ill-bred as in those great Attic orators, but appropriate, clever raillery, comic power in plenty, the sting which goes with well-aimed fun, and with all this what I may call inimitable charm. He has a strong natural gift for compassion, and also for telling a story fluently, running through a description before a flowing breeze with admirable

who says that Sophocles may be blamed '*for his inequality*.' Bergk understands it with reference to such passages as *Antigone*, 924, &c., which many good judges have felt unable to accept as genuine.

[1] Hyperides, an Attic orator, born about B.C. 396, died 322, 'the Sheridan of Athens.' Sir R. C. Jebb in *Attic Orators*, vol ii. c. 22, where this passage of our text is translated

[2] 'He has more tones in his voice,' Jebb.

ease in tacking: for instance, the story of Latona he has treated rather as a poet, the Funeral Speech as a set, perhaps an unmatched, effort of the oratory of display. Demosthenes has no touches of character, no flowing style; certainly he is not supple, and cannot speak for display: he lacks the whole list of qualities mentioned above: when he is forced to be witty and smart, he raises a laugh against, rather than with himself; when he wants to approach charm of manner he passes farthest from it. We may be sure that if he had attempted to write the little speech on *Phryne* or that on *Athenogenes*, he would have established even more firmly the fame of Hyperides. As I see it, the case stands thus:—The beauties of the latter though they be many, are devoid of greatness[1], dull 'to a sober man's heart,' and allow the hearer to rest unmoved (who feels fear when he reads Hyperides?); Demosthenes 'taking up the tale[2],' adds excellences of the highest genius and of consummate perfection, sublimity of tone, passions in living embodiment, copiousness, versatility, speed; also, which is his own prerogative, ability and force beyond approach. Now whereas, I say, he has drawn to himself in one all those marvellous and heaven-sent gifts, for human we may not call them, therefore by the beauties which he has he surpasses all other men

[1] Similar words occur in a passage of Plutarch (*De Garr.* 4) where they appear to be a poetical quotation.

[2] An Homeric phrase (*Od.* viii. 500), used when one minstrel succeeds another.

admire, not surely the little streams, transparent though they be, and useful too, but Nile, or Tiber, or Rhine, and far more than all, Ocean; nor are we awed by this little flame of our kindling, because it keeps its light clear, more than by those heavenly bodies, often obscured though they be, nor think it more marvellous than the craters of Etna, whose eruptions bear up stones and entire masses, and sometimes pour forth rivers of that Titanic and unalloyed fire. Regarding all such things we may say this, that what is serviceable or perhaps necessary to man, man can procure; what passes his thought wins his wonder.

XXXVI

HENCE, when we speak of men of great genius in literature, where the greatness does not necessarily fall outside the needs and service of man, we must at once arrive at the conclusion, that men of this stature, though far removed from flawless perfection, yet all rise above the mortal: other qualities prove those who possess them to be men, sublimity raises them almost to the intellectual greatness of God. No failure, no blame; but greatness has our very wonder. What need still to add, that each of these great men is often seen to redeem all his failures by a single sublimity, a single success; and further, which is most convincing, that if we were to pick out all the failures of Homer, Demosthenes, Plato, and the other greatest writers, and to mass them together, the result would be a small, an insignificant fraction of the successes

which men of that heroic build everywhere exhibit. Therefore every age and all time, which envy itself can never prove to be in its dotage, has bestowed upon them the assured prizes of victory; it guards and keeps them to this day safe and inalienable, and will as it seems, keep them

As long as waters flow and poplars bloom[1].

To the writer, however, who objects that the faulty Colossus is not better work than the Spearman of Polycleitus[2] I might say much, but I say this. In Art the most accurate work is admired, in the works of Nature greatness. Now it is by Nature that man is a being endowed with speech; therefore in statues we seek what is like man, in speech what surpasses, as I said, human standards. Yet it is right (for our precept returns to the early words of this treatise), because the success of never failing is in most cases due to Art, the success of high although not uniform excellence, to Genius; that, therefore, Art should ever be brought in to aid Nature; where they are reciprocal the result should be perfection. It was necessary to go thus far towards a decision upon the points raised: let every one take the view which pleases him, and enjoy it.

[1] From an epigram on Midas, quoted by Plato *Phaedrus*, 264 C). The somewhat sentimental character of the quotation here may be noticed.

[2] Perhaps the famous Colossus of Rhodes, perhaps a later work Polycleitus, an artist of Sicyon of the fifth century B.C. His Spearman was known as the 'Canon' or Standard of proportion in Art. Copies have reached us, of which the best is probably a figure from Herculaneum now at Naples.

XXXVII

IN close neighbourhood to Metaphors, for we must go back to them, come Illustrations and Similes, which differ from them in this respect . . .[1]

[*Here about six pages have been lost.*]

XXXVIII

SUCH Hyperboles as this are also ludicrous, 'unless you wear your brains in your heels to be trampled down'.[2] Hence we ought to know exactly how far each should go, for sometimes to advance beyond these limits destroys the hyperbole; in such cases extreme tension brings relaxation, and even works right round to its opposite. Thus Isocrates fell into a strange puerility owing to his ambition to amplify at all points. The Argument of his *Panegyricus* is that the state of the Athenians surpasses that of the Lacedaemonians in services to the Greeks; but at the very beginning he has this:—'Moreover words are so potent, that it is possible thereby to make what is great lowly, and to throw greatness about what is small, and to treat old things in a new fashion, and those which have recently

[1] 'The simile too is a metaphor, the difference between them being only slight. Thus where Homer says of Achilles that "he rushed on like a lion," it is a simile; but when he says that "he rushed on, a very lion," it is a metaphor.'—Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 3, c. iv, tr. Welldon.

[2] From the *Halonnesus*, a speech once attributed to Demosthenes.

happened in an old fashion.'[1] 'What, Isocrates', some one will say, 'do you mean then to change the parts of the Lacedaemonians and Athenians?' For this set praise of speech goes near to an open warning at the outset not to believe him. Possibly then the best hyperboles, as we said above in speaking of figures, are those which are not noticed as hyperboles at all. This result is obtained when they are uttered in an outburst of strong feeling, and in harmony with a certain grandeur in the crisis described, as where Thucydides is speaking of the men slaughtered in Sicily. 'For the Syracusans', he says, 'also came down and butchered them, but especially those in the water, which was thus immediately spoiled, but which they went on drinking just the same, mud and all, bloody as it was, even fighting to have it.'[2] That blood and mud were drunk together, and yet were things fought over, passes for credible in the intensity of the feeling and in the crisis. The passage in Herodotus about the men of Thermopylae is similar: 'On this spot', he says, 'while defending themselves with daggers, that is, those who still had them left, and also with hands and with teeth, they were buried alive under the missiles of the Barbarians.'[3] Here 'What sort of thing is it', you will say, 'to fight with very teeth against armed men', or what to be 'buried alive under missiles'? But it passes for true like the other; for the fact does not appear to be introduced for the sake of the hyperbole, but the hyperbole to pass because

[1] c. viii. [2] vii. 84 [3] vii. 225.

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sure that you will think that a sublime thought, and marvellous indeed it is, which Demosthenes applied to his decree:—'This decree made the danger, which then encompassed the city, to pass away like a vapour[1].' But the harmony of the thought, no less than the thought itself, has given it voice. For the whole expression rests upon the dactylic rhythms, the most noble and productive of grandeur, which make the structure of heroic metre the noblest known to us. Take any word out of its own place, and transfer it where you will:—'This *proposal*, like a vapour, made the danger of that day to pass away'; or, again, cut off one syllable only:—'made it to pass like vapour'; and you will learn how closely the rhythm echoes the sublimity. For the actual phrase 'like a vapour' moves with the first rhythm long, if measured by four times.[2] Cut out the *one* syllable, you have 'as vapour', the *curtailment* mutilates the grandeur; as, on the other hand, if you lengthen it out, 'made to pass away like to a vapour', the sense is the same, but not the effect on the ear, because by the length of the times at the end of the phrase, its sheer sublimity is broken up and unstrung.

XL

LANGUAGE is made grand in the highest degree by that which corresponds to the collocation of limbs in the body, of which no one, if

[1] *De Corona*, 188.

[2] i.e. equivalent to four short syllables. The difficult metrical questions raised in the passage are discussed by Dr. Verrall (*Class. Rev.* xix. p. 254).

cut off from another, has anything noticeable in itself, yet all in combination produce a perfect structure. So great passages, when separate and scattered in different parts, scatter also the sublimity; but if they are formed by partnership into a body, and also enclosed by the bond of rhythm, the limits which encircle them give them new voice; one might put it that grand effects within a period contribute to a common fund of grandeur. However it has been already shown that many prose writers and poets of no natural sublimity, possibly themselves altogether wanting in grandeur, and using in general common and popular words, such as contribute nothing remarkable, have yet, by mere arrangement and adjustment, attained a real dignity and distinction of style, in which no pettiness is apparent; so, amongst many others, Philistus, Aristophanes in certain passages, Euripides in most. After the murder of his children Hercules cries:—

I am full fraught with ills—no stowing more.[1]

The phrase is quite popular, but has become sublime because the handling of the words conforms to the subject. If you place the words in other combinations, you will see clearly that Euripides is a poet of composition rather than of intellect. When Dirce is being dragged away by the bull:—

Where'er it chanced,
Rolling around he with him ever drew
Wife, oak-tree, rock, in constant interchange.[2]

[1] *Hercules Furens*, 1245, tr. R. Browning.
[2] From the *Antiope*, a lost play.

The conception in itself is a noble one, but has become more forcible from the rhythm not being hurried, nor borne along as on rollers; the words are solidly attached to one another, and checks caused by the syllabic quantities, which result in stability and grandeur.

XLI

THERE is nothing which introduces pettiness into sublime passages so much as a broken and excited rhythm, as pyrrhics, trochees, and dichorees, which fall into a thorough dancing measure. For in prose complete rhythm appears dainty and trivial, and entirely lacks passion, because the sameness makes it superficial. The worst point of all about this is, that, as ballad-music draws away the hearers perforce from the subject to itself, so prose which is made over-rhythmical does not give the hearers the effect of the prose but that of the rhythm; so that in some cases, knowing beforehand the endings as they become due, people actually beat time with the speakers, and get before them, and render the movement too soon, as though in a dance. Equally devoid of grandeur are passages which lie too close, cut up into scraps and minute syllables, and bound together by clamps between piece and piece in the way of socket and insertion.[1]

[1] Here again (as on p. 26) the terms of masonry are obscure, though the general drift of the simile is apparent.

XLII

ANOTHER means of lowering sublimity is excessive conciseness of expression; a grand phrase is maimed when it is gathered into too short a compass. I must be understood to refer not to mere undue compression, but to what is absolutely small and comminuted[1]: contraction stunts the sense, a short cut goes straight. In the other direction it is clear that what is spun out is lifeless, all 'which conjures up unseasonable length'.[2]

XLIII

PETTINESS of words, again, is strangely potent in making fine passages mean. Thus in Herodotus the storm[3] has been finely described with great spirit, so far as the ideas go, but certain words are included which are surely too ignoble for the subject; this in particular, 'when the sea boiled', the word 'boiled' greatly spoils the sublimity, being so poor in sound; then he has 'the wind flagged', and again 'Those who were about the wreck and clutching it met an unwelcome end', 'flagged' is an undignified vulgarism, and 'unwelcome' is an inadequate word for such a disaster. So also Theopompus[4], in a brilliant and elaborate account of the descent of the Persian army

[1] Perhaps this should read 'not to proper compression' (if a negative be omitted in the original).
[2] Apparently a poetical quotation.
[3] vii. 188. [4] See p. 56

upon Egypt, by a few paltry words has spoilt the whole passage:—'For what city of Asia, or what tribe, did not send envoys to the King? What beautiful or costly thing which earth grows, or art produces, was not brought as a gift to him? Were there not many and costly coverlets and cloaks, purple, and variegated, and white pieces, and many tents of gold, furnished with all things serviceable; many costly robes and couches? There were also vessels of wrought gold and silver, drinking cups and bowls, of which you might have seen some crusted with precious stones, others worked with elaborate and costly art: besides these were untold quantities of arms, some Greek, some barbarian, beasts of burden in exceedingly great numbers, and victims fatted for slaughter, many bushels of spices, many sacks and bags and sheets of papyrus and all other commodities; and so many pickled carcases of all sorts of animals, that the size of the heaps made those who approached from a distance think that they were mounds and hillocks as they jostled one another'. He runs off from the loftier to the more humble details, whereas he ought to have made his description rise in the other direction. With his marvellous account of the whole provision he has mixed up his bags and spices, and has drawn to the imagination—a cook-shop! Suppose one had really placed among those things of show, in the middle of the gold and the gem-crusted cups and the silver vessels, common bags and sacks, the effect to the eye would have been unseemly; so in a description each of

such words placed there out of season is an ugliness and, so to say, a blot where it stands. It was open to him to go through all in broad outline: as he has told us of heaps taken to be hillocks, so he might have given us all the rest of the pageant, camels, a multitude of beasts of burden carrying all supplies for luxury and the enjoyment of the table, or he might have specified heaps of every sort of grain and of all that is best for confectionery and daintiness; or, if he meant, at all costs, to put the whole down in an inclusive list, he might have said 'all the dainties known to victuallers and confectioners'[1]. For we ought not in sublime passages to stoop to mean and discredited terms unless we are compelled by some strong necessity; but it would be proper even in words to keep to those which sound worthy of the subject, and to copy Nature who fashioned man; for she did not place our less honourable parts in front, nor the purgings of all gross matter, but hid them away so far as she could, and, as Xenophon tells us[2], removed the channels of such things to as great a distance as possible, nowhere disfiguring the beauty of the whole animal. But there is no present need to enumerate by their kinds the means of producing pettiness; when we have once shown what things make writings noble and sublime, it is clear that their opposites will make them in most cases low and uncouth.

[1] 'The critic complains of bathos, but the passage reads like the intentional bathos of satire.'—G. Murray, *Hist. of Ancient Greek Literature*, p 390.

[2] *Memorabilia*, i. 4. 6.

XLIV

ONE point remains, which in view of your diligence in learning, I shall not hesitate to add. This is to give a clear answer to a question lately put to me by one of our philosophers: 'I wonder', he said, 'as assuredly do many others, how it is that in our age we have men whose genius is persuasive and statesman-like in the extreme, keen and versatile; but minds of a high order of sublimity and greatness are no longer produced, or quite exceptionally, such is the world-wide barrenness of literature that now pervades our life. Are we indeed', he went on, 'to believe the common voice[1], that democracy is a good nurse of all that is great; that with free government nearly all powerful orators attained their prime, and died with it? For Freedom, they say, has the power of breeding noble spirits; it gives them hopes, and passes hand in hand with them through their eager mutual strife and their ambition to reach the first prizes. Further, because of the prizes offered to competition in commonwealths, the intellectual gifts of orators are kept in exercise and whetted by use; the rub of politics, if I may use the word, kindles them to fire; *they shine, as shine they must*, with the light of public freedom. But we in our day', he went on, 'seem to be from our childhood scholars of a dutiful slavery; in its customs and practices we

[1] Compare Tacitus, *Dialogus*, 40. 'But the great and memorable eloquence of which men tell is the foster child of license, which fools used to call liberty.' (Maternus, the poet, is summing up.)

are enwrapped and swathed from the very infancy of our thoughts, never tasting that fairest and most abundant fount of eloquence, I mean Freedom; wherefore we turn out nothing but flatterers of portentous growth[1]. Other faculties, he asserted, might be the portion of mere household servants, but no slave becomes an orator; for instantly there surges up the helplessness to speak out, there is the guard on the lips enforced by the cudgel of habitude[1]. As Homer has it:—

> Half that man's virtue doth Zeus take away,
> Whom he surrenders to the servile day.'[2]

'As then', he went on, 'if what I hear is to be believed, the cages in which the Pygmies, also called dwarfs[3], are reared, not only hinder the growth of those who are shut up in them, but actually shrivel them because of the bonds lying about their bodies, so one might show that all slavery, though it be never so dutiful, is a cage of the soul and a public prison.' Here I rejoined: 'Sir,' I said, 'it is easy, and it is man's special habit, always to find fault with things present: but consider whether it may not be that what spoils noble natures is, not the peace of the universal world, but much rather this war which masters our desires, and to which no bounds are set, aye, and more

[1] The rare verb used here in the original is found in a passage of the Jewish writer Philo (*de temul*, i, p. 357 A), also of slaves.

[2] *Od.* xvii. 322.

[3] There was a fashion of keeping dwarfs at Rome under the early emperors. Augustus himself, who abhorred freaks and monstrosities, took pleasure in them (Suetonius, *Life of Augustus*, c. 83).

than that, these passions which keep our life a prisoner and make spoil of it altogether? The love of money, which cannot be satisfied and is a disease with us all, and the love of pleasure both lead us into slavery, or rather, as one might put it, thrust our lives and ourselves down into the depths: the love of money, a disease which makes us little, the love of pleasure, which is utterly ignoble. I try to reckon it up, but I cannot discover how it is possible that we who so greatly honour boundless wealth, who, to speak more truly, make it a god, can fail to receive into our souls the kindred evils which enter with it. There follows on unmeasured and unchecked wealth, bound to it and keeping step for step, as they say, costliness of living; which, when wealth opens the way into cities and houses, enters and settles therein. When these evils have passed much time in our lives, they build nests, the wise tell us, and soon proceed to breed and engender boasting, and vapouring, and luxury; no spurious brood, but all too truly their own. For this must perforce be so; men will no longer look up, nor otherwise take any account of good reputation; little by little the ruin of their whole life is effected; all greatness of soul dwindles and withers, and ceases to be emulated, while men admire their own mortal parts, and neglect to improve the immortal. A judge bribed for his verdict could never be a free and sound judge of things just and good, for to the corrupted judge the side which he is to take must needs appear good and just. Even so, where bribes already rule our whole

lives, and the hunt for other men's deaths, and the lying in wait for their wills, and where we purchase with our soul gain from wherever it comes, led captive each by his own luxury, do we really expect, amidst this ruin and undoing of our life, that any is yet left a free and uncorrupted judge of great things and things which reach to eternity; and that we are not downright bribed by our desire to better ourselves? For such men as we are, it may possibly be better to be governed than to be free; since greed and grasping, if let loose together against our neighbours, as beasts out of a den, would soon deluge the world with evils.' I gave the general explanation that what eats up our modern characters is the indolence in which, with few exceptions, we all now live, never working or undertaking work save for the sake of praise or of pleasure, instead of that assistance to others which is a thing worthy of emulation and of honour.

'Best leave such things to take their chance[1]', and pass we to the next topic; this was to be the passions, about which I promised beforehand to write in a separate paper, inasmuch as they cover a side of the general subject of speech, and of sublimity in particular.

[1] From Euripides, *Electra*, 379.

APPENDIX
I

Specimen Passages translated from Greek Writers of the Roman Empire on Literary Criticism

DIONYSIUS OF HALICARNASSUS

Dionysius of Halicarnassus (about 78–7 B.C.), a learned writer on history and criticism. Under the latter head come the *Three Literary Letters*, dealing with Demosthenes, Plato, and Thucydides, and *Notes on the Ancient Orators* (the former work translated and edited by Professor Rhys Roberts), and the treatise *On Composition*, from which our extract is taken. The style is pure and the criticism marked by good judgement and taste, and of real value. There are many phrases which he uses in common with the writer of the *Treatise on the Sublime*; but the difference in point of view may be seen in the differing conclusions which they respectively illustrate by the two Odes of Sappho which we owe to them. On the passage here selected, see Jebb's *Attic Orators*, ii. 56–8.

ON THE SMOOTH STYLE

THE smooth and florid mode of composition, which I placed second in order, has the following characteristics:—It does not seek to be seen in clear light in its every word, nor always to move on a broad safe platform, nor to have long intervals between words; this slow balanced procedure is not at all to its taste, it asks for a vocabulary which is in motion and activity,

where half the words lean upon the other half, and all find steadiness in the mutual support, like flowing streams which run without a tremor. It requires that its several members be included and interwoven in one another, and produce, so far as that is possible, a visible effect. This is done by accurate junctures, admitting no perceptible interval between the words; upon this side it resembles fine-woven stuffs, or paintings wherein the lights melt into the shadows. It would have all its words euphonious and smooth, tender and maidenish. Rough strident syllables are its special aversion; it is always shy of what is bold and hazardous.

It not only desires that the words be fitly joined with words and fitted, but also that clauses be woven in with clauses, and that all take final form in a period; it must have clauses of a length neither longer nor shorter than what is moderate, and a period shorter than a man's completed breath: it could not endure to turn out a passage without periods, or a period without clauses, or a clause without symmetry. Of rhythms it employs, not the longest, but those which are moderate or comparatively short; the ends of its periods must be rhythmical and firm, as though by square and level. In the joinings of periods and of words it takes two different rules; words it makes glide into one, periods it forces apart, they must present a clear view all round. It will have no figures of the most old-fashioned kind, none to which any solemnity attaches, or ponderousness, or the dust of ages; it mostly loves to use those which are dainty and soft; in which there

is so much theatrical beguilement. To use plainer words, this style is on most important points the opposite of that mentioned before[1], but of these points I need not speak again.

The next thing would naturally be to enumerate those who have reached the first place in it. Of [illegible] poets [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] Simonides, of tragic poets Euripides alone; of historians, no one in perfect detail, but Ephorus and Theopompus better than the majority; of orators Isocrates. I will add the following specimens of the cadence, selecting Sappho for the poets, and Isocrates for the orators: I will begin with the lyricist:—

Immortal Venus, throned above
In radiant beauty, child of Jove,
O skilled in every art of love
And artful snare;
Dread power, to whom I bend the knee,
Release my soul and set it free
From bonds of piercing agony
And gloomy care.
Yet come thyself, if e'er, benign
Thy listening ears thou didst incline
To my rude lay, the starry shrine
Of Jove's court leaving,
In chariot yoked with coursers fair,
Thine own immortal birds that bear
Thee swift to earth, the middle air
With bright wings cleaving.

Soon they were sped—and thou, most blest,
In thine own smiles ambrosial dressed,
Didst ask what griefs my mind oppressed—
What meant my song—
What end my frenzied thoughts pursue
For what loved youth I spread anew
My amorous nets—'Who Sappho, who
Hath done thee wrong?
What though he fly, he'll soon return—
Still press thy gifts, though now he spurn;
Heed not his coldness—soon he'll burn,
E'en though thou chide.'
—And saidst thou thus, dread goddess? Oh,
Come then once more to ease my woe;
Grant all, and thy great self bestow,
My shield and guide![1]

Here the beauty and grace of the language lies in the connexion of the words and the smoothness of the junctures. For the words lie by the side of one another, and are woven into one, as though there were in each case a natural affinity or a marriage between the letters. Vowels are fitted on to mutes and semi-vowels through nearly the entire Ode, these in a leading place, those in a subordinate. Of concurrences of semi-vowels with semi-vowels, or of vowels with vowels, to trouble the smooth waters of the cadences, there are very few. I have looked carefully through the whole Ode; and among all that number of nouns, verbs, and other parts of speech, I find only five cases, or possibly six, of the combination of semi-vowels not naturally

[1] Translated by J. Herman Merivale, 1833. The original is in the same metre, the Sapphic, as the Ode quoted in sect. 2 of the *Treatise*.

suited to be commingled, and even these do not roughen the flow of language in any great degree.

[*De Compositione Verborum*, c. xxiii.]

PLUTARCH

Plutarch (about 40–120 A.D.), a native of Chaeroneia in Boeotia, where, in later life, he held a priesthood: he spent many years in Rome, and visited other parts of Italy. Besides his great work, the *Parallel Lives of Greeks and Romans*, written in his later years, he is the author of many miscellaneous essays on historical, ethical, and literary subjects, which bear the general title of *Moralia*. All his writings are distinguished by strong good sense, right feeling, amiability and a love of anecdote: his style is cumbrous, but has much individuality. The Treatise from which our extract is taken deals with the question: How a young man should be introduced to Poetry in preparation for Moral Philosophy. Plutarch may be read in Amyot's French translation, or in English in Philemon Holland's.

HOW A YOUNG MAN SHOULD READ POETRY

STILL more carefully will we impress upon him, as soon as we introduce him to poems, a conception of poetry as an art of imitation, in its scope corresponding to painting. Do not let his lesson stop at the old jingle, that Poetry is Painting which speaks, and Painting is Poetry which is mute; let us teach him further that, when we see a lizard painted, or an ape, or the face of a Thersites, we enjoy and admire it because it is like, not because it is beautiful. In itself the ugly can never become beautiful; but we praise imitation if it effects a likeness, whether the subject be bad or good. On the other hand, if it present a beautiful copy of an ugly form, it has failed to render

a proper likeness. There are artists who paint unnatural actions, as Timomachus painted Medea slaying her children, and Theon Orestes slaying his mother, and Parrhasius Ulysses feigning madness. Our pupil should be made familiar with all these; we must teach him that we do not praise the action, of which the imitation is before him, but the art which has imitated the action properly: that accordingly, when Poetry also tells us, in imitative form, of bad actions and vicious feelings and characters, he is not to accept as true what is admired and successful therein, nor yet to approve it as beautiful, but only to praise it in so far as it is *suitable and proper to the given person*. Just as when we hear the squealing of a pig, and the dull noise of a windlass, and the whistling of winds, and the roar of the sea, we are troubled and disgusted, but if any one imitate these naturally, as Parmeno used to give the sow, and Theodorus the windlass, we enjoy it. Again, we shun a man stricken by sickness and full of sores, as being a disagreeable spectacle; but we look with pleasure at the Philoctetes of Aristophon, and the Jocasta of Silanion, represented like wasted and dying men. Just so, when a young man reads what Thersites the buffoon, or a Sisyphus, or a Batrachus, has been exhibited saying or doing, let him be taught to praise the art and the power which imitated such things, but as for the disposition and the conduct described, to repudiate and think meanly of them. *It is one thing to imitate a beautiful object, and another to imitate an object beautifully.* For

'beautifully' means fitly, suitably, but to the ugly the only fit and suitable things are the ugly. Why, the shoes of Demodocus the cripple, which he lost, and then prayed that they might fit the feet of the thief well, were shabby affairs, but they fitted him.

The lines:—

If thou must sin at all, take courage man,
Sin where a kingdom is the prize.
[Eur. *Phoen.* 245.]

and—

Make thou thy credit angel-white, thy deeds
As dark as desperation—both for gain!
Anon. (tr. E. M.)

and—

To take or not to take? a talent—humph—
A talent I can pass, yet live—and sleep,
As sleep the just—no, never shall they say
Down there, 'he lost his soul and won a groat.'
Anon.

are so *many vicious lies*, but good *enough* for Eteocles and Ixion and a hoary artist in sixty per cent.

[*De Audiendis Poetis*, c. iii.]

DION CHRYSOSTOM

Dion Chrysostom (about 50–117 A.D.), a native of Prusa in Bithynia—a famous rhetorician and sophist; in philosophy an eclectic, with a strong attraction to Stoic and Platonic views. His Orations, really Essays on literary and philosophical subjects, have charm of thought and *purity of style*, with little severity or seriousness of aim. The passage translated is an interesting *comparison of the methods of Poetry and Sculpture*, put into the mouth of Phidias, whose art is supposed to be put upon its defence.

THE DEFENCE OF PHIDIAS

To all this Phidias might perhaps reply, being no man without a tongue, a citizen of no city without

a tongue, and moreover a friend and intimate of Pericles:—

'Men of Greece, the issue is the greatest which has ever been tried; for it is not about power or office in a single city, nor about numbers of navy or of army, and their right or wrong administration, that I am put upon my defence this day; but about the God who rules all, and his likeness, whether it has been wrought handsomely and with truth to life, wanting nothing of the best rendering which man can give of the divine, or whether it be unworthy and unfit. But consider that I was not the first to be the expounder and teacher of truth among you. For I was not born in the early days when Greece had still no clear and steady principles about these things; she was already in a sort elderly, and had convictions about the gods, which she held with vehemence. Of the works of stone-cutters and masons which are older than my own handiwork, harmonious enough unless as to accuracy of finish, I have nothing to say. But I found your opinions old and immovable, to which no opposition was possible, and I found other artists in divine things, much older than myself, and claiming to be much wiser, I mean the poets; able, they said, to lead us by their poetry to full knowledge of the divine, whereas our works have only just this passable resemblance. For divine appearances, those of the sun and moon, and all the heaven, and the stars, are most wonderful in their own selves, but their imitation is simple and artless, if a man were to try to copy the phases of the moon or

the disk of the sun. Again, the objects themselves are full of character and of thought, in their likenesses nothing of the sort is exhibited. Accordingly the Greeks of old took this view. For mind and wisdom, as they are in themselves, no sculptor or painter will ever be able to represent, they are absolutely unable to see such things or to search them out. But we do not guess at that wherein this originates, we know it, and therefore we have recourse to it, attaching a human body to a god, as a vessel which contains wisdom and reason; we have no pattern and despair of getting one, so we seek to exhibit under a visible and intelligible form that which is beyond our intelligence and invisible; and we use the aid of a symbol, more effectually than some barbarians, who, they tell us, liken the divine to animals upon trifling and absurd pretexts. He who most greatly excels in a sense of beauty, dignity, and magnificence should be the best artificer by far of images of the gods. Nor can it be said that it were better that no shrine, no likeness of a god should be exhibited among men, as though we ought to gaze only on the heavenly things. All those heavenly things are honoured by a sensible man, who deems them to be blessed gods, beholding them from afar. But because of our feeling towards what is divine, all men have a strong desire to have the deity near them, to honour and to care for; approaching, and addressing themselves to it with conviction, burning incense, and placing crowns. For just as young children when torn from father and mother feel a

strange yearning and desire, and often stretch out their hands in dreams to those who are not there, so also do men to gods; they rightly love them because of benevolence and kinship, and are eager to do anything to follow and be with them. Accordingly many barbarians, in the poverty and meagreness of their art, call hills, and motionless trees, and unmarked stones by the name of gods, though in no way nearer to gods than is their form. If I am to be blamed about the figure, you cannot be too prompt in directing your wrath against Homer first; he not only imitated the form in a manner most closely resembling art, mentioning the hair of the god, and his beard too, at the very beginning of the poem, when he speaks of Thetis entreating for the honour of her son; but, besides all this, he ascribes to the gods meetings, deliberations, harangues, how they came from Ida and arrived at Olympus and heaven, their sleeping, their drinking, their courting, with great loftiness no doubt, and ornament of verse, yet keeping closely always to a mortal likeness. Yes, and when he dared to compare Agamemnon to the god in his most sovereign attributes:—

'In eyes and head like thunder-loving Zeus'.

But the work of my handicraft no man, no lunatic, could ever compare to mortal man, if fairly examined in view of beauty or size. So it comes to this, that if I do not appear to you a far better and wiser poet than Homer, whom you have decided to be a peer of the

gods in wisdom, I am ready to undergo any penalty you choose. I am speaking with the powers of my own art in view. For poetry is a copious undertaking, resourceful and independent; it wants a tongue to help it and a supply of words, and then it can, of its own self, express all the wishes of the soul: whatever it be which its thought perceives, figure or fact, passion or grandeur, it can never be at fault for a speaking voice to announce all this very distinctly.

'Man's tongue wags lightly, and his words o'erflow'.

—these are Homer's own words—

'Full swift: and wide their range to move in to and fro'.

For the human race is likely to go short of everything sooner than of speech and language; of this alone it has laid up marvellous great wealth. Nothing reaches the senses, which it has left unspoken or unstamped; down goes upon the conception the clear seal of a word, often several words for one thing; speak any one of them, and you convey a thought scarcely less powerful than the reality. So man has very great power and resource in language to express what occurs to him. But the art of the poets is very wilful and irresponsible, most of all that of Homer, who is bolder than they all, he did not choose one type of language, but mixed up all the Hellenic language, long distinct in its parts, Dorian and Ionian, and Athenian too, he mixed them all up into one as dyers mix colours, only more freely; he did not stop at his own generation, but went back to ancestors; had a word dropped out, he was sure to pick it

up, like an old coin out of an unclaimed treasure-house, all for love of words; and again many barbarian terms, sparing no single word which seemed to have in it enjoyment or intensity; and, besides all these, he drew in metaphors, not only neighbour-words or those lying at hand, but the very most remote, to charm his hearer, and astonish and bewitch him. Even these he did not allow to keep their own ground, but lengthened here, and contracted there, and altered all round; and at last came out as a maker not of verses only, but also of terms, speaking out of his inner self, sometimes just inventing names for things, sometimes giving a new sense to standard words, as if he were impressing upon a seal a clear and yet more distinct seal, leaving no sound alone, but, in a word, imitating sounds of river and wood, of wind, and fire, and sea.'

[*Or.* xii, *Olympicus.*]

LUCIAN

Lucian (about 120–200 A.D.), of Samosata, the capital of Commagēnē. A brilliant and witty writer, who has left works on a great variety of subjects. His style is excellent, and is, generally speaking, a pure Attic. The treatise on the question 'How History should be written,' shows, as do many of his writings, much discrimination and literary feeling.

HOW NOT TO WRITE HISTORY[1]

THERE is a story of a curious epidemic at Abdera, just after the accession of King Lysimachus. It began

[1] The passage which follows is extracted, by the kind permission of the translators, from the translation of Lucian by H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler (Clarendon Press, 4 vols., 1905).

with the whole population's exhibiting feverish symptoms, strongly marked and unintermittent from the very first attack. About the seventh day, the fever was relieved, in some cases by a violent flow of blood from the nose, in others by perspiration not less violent. The mental effects, however, were most ridiculous; they were all stage-struck, mouthing blank verse and ranting at the top of their voices. Their favourite recitation was the *Andromeda* of Euripides; one after another would go through the great speech of Perseus; the whole place was full of pale ghosts, who were our seventh-day tragedians vociferating,

O Love, who lord'st it over Gods and men,

and the rest of it. This continued for some time, till the coming of winter put an end to their madness with a sharp frost. I find the explanation of the form it took in this fact: Archelaus was then the great tragic actor, and in the middle of the summer, during some very hot weather, he had played the *Andromeda* there; most of them took the fever in the theatre, and convalescence was followed by a relapse—into tragedy, the *Andromeda* haunting their memories, and Perseus hovering, Gorgon's head in hand, before the mind's eye.

Well, to compare like with like, the majority of our educated class is now suffering from an Abderite epidemic. They are not stage-struck, indeed; that would have been a minor infatuation—to be possessed with other people's verses, not bad ones either; no; but from the beginning of the present excitements—the

barbarian war, the Armenian disaster, the succession of victories—you cannot find a man but is writing history; nay, every one you meet is a Thucydides, a Herodotus, a Xenophon. The old saying must be true, and war be the father of all things, seeing what a litter of historians it has now teemed forth at a birth.

Such sights and sounds, my Philo, brought into my head that old anecdote about the Sinopean. A report that Philip was marching on the town had thrown all Corinth into a bustle; one was furbishing his arms, another wheeling stones, a third patching the wall, a fourth strengthening a battlement, every one making himself useful somehow or other. Diogenes having nothing to do—of course no one thought of giving *him* a job—was moved by the sight to gird up his philosopher's cloak and begin rolling his tub-dwelling energetically up and down the Craneum; an acquaintance asked, and got, the explanation: 'I do not want to be thought the only idler in such a busy multitude; I am rolling my tub to be like the rest.'

I too am reluctant to be the only dumb man at so vociferous a season; I do not like walking across the stage, like a 'super,' in gaping silence; so I decided to roll *my* cask as best I could. I do not intend to write a history, or attempt actual narrative; I am not courageous enough for that; have no apprehensions on my account; I realize the danger of rolling the thing over the rocks, especially if it is only a poor little jar of brittle earthenware like mine; I should very soon knock against some pebble and find myself picking up

the pieces. Come, I will tell you my idea for campaigning in safety, and keeping well out of range.

Give a wide berth to all that foam and spray,

and to the anxieties which vex the historian—that I shall be wise enough to do; but I propose to give a little advice, and lay down a few principles for the benefit of those who do venture. I shall have a share in their building, if not in the dedicatory inscription; my finger-tips will at least have touched their wet mortar.

However, most of them see no need for advice here: *there might as well be an art of talking, seeing, or eating; history-writing is perfectly easy, comes natural, is a universal gift; all that is necessary is the faculty of translating your thoughts into words.* But the truth is—you know it without my telling, old friend—, it is *not* a task to be lightly undertaken, or carried through without effort, no, it needs as much care as any sort of composition whatever, if one means to create 'a possession for ever,' as Thucydides calls it. Well, I know I shall not get a hearing from many of them, and some will be seriously offended—especially any who have finished and produced their work; in cases where its first reception was favourable, it would be folly to expect the authors to recast or correct; has it not the stamp of finality? is it not almost a State document? Yet even they may profit by my words; *we* are not likely to be attacked again; we have disposed of all our enemies; but there might be a Celto-Gothic or an Indo-Bactrian war; then our friends' composition might be improved by the applica

distinguish history from poetry; what, bedizen history, like her sister, with tale and eulogy and their attendant exaggerations? as well take some mighty athlete with muscles of steel, rig him up with purple drapery and meretricious ornament, rouge and powder his cheeks; faugh, what an object would one make of him with such defilements!

[*Quomodo Historia conscribenda sit*, sect. 1–8.]

CASSIUS LONGINUS

Cassius Longinus (213–273 A.D.): a great philosophical and literary teacher, born, according to varying accounts, at Palmyra, Emesa in Syria, or Athens, where his uncle, Phronto, taught rhetoric. He was a great student and interpreter of Plato, and did not satisfy the Neoplatonist teachers, being called by Plotinus a philologer and no philosopher. Porphyrius the commentator on Homer was one of his most distinguished pupils. He became the teacher, and afterwards the political adviser, of Queen Zenobia. Moved by a genuine love of liberty, he encouraged the Queen to assert her independence of the Emperor Aurelian; and for his share in the rising he paid with his life, when Palmyra was taken and destroyed. Considerable fragments of his works remain, the most notable being a part of his *Rhetoric*, which had been intermixed in MSS. with a similar work by Apsines, and was extricated by the insight of the great scholar D. Ruhnken, though not published till after his death by W. Bake.

LONGINUS ON THE TIMAEUS OF PLATO

'ONE, two, three: but where, dear Timaeus, is the fourth of our guests of yesterday, our entertainers of to-day—where is he?[1]'

[1] The opening words of the *Timaeus* of Plato.

Longinus the critic, considering this passage as to language, says that it is composed of three members; of which the first is somewhat trivial and ordinary, because the expression wants connexion, but is rendered dignified by the second, through the variation in the wording, and the continuity of the phrases; that both, however, receive a much greater accession of grace and elevation[1] from the third. Thus the clause, 'One, two, three,' composed of unconnected terms, made style flat. The next clause, 'our fourth, dear Timaeus, where is he?' is varied by the ordinal 'fourth' as against the cardinal numbers used before; it is also constructed of words in an effective manner, and in both ways makes the expression more dignified. But the words, 'of our guests of yesterday, our entertainers of to-day,' over and above the grace and beauty of the words used, give spirit and elevation to the whole period by the fresh turn.

[*From the Commentary of Proclus, Vaucher*, p. 274.]

LONGINUS ON STYLE

Not the least important part of an inquiry into the Art of Rhetoric is Style; for the arguments and all the parts of Discourse appear to the hearers just what Style makes them. Such Discourse may be called a light of thoughts and of trains of reasoning, illuminating for the judges the cogency of the proof. Accordingly, Style is not to be neglected: on the contrary, the greatest care should be given to it, and those orators

[1] The Greek word is that used in the *Treatise* to express 'Sublimity.'

taken as models who have excelled in this department, and have invested their delivery with the utmost beauty and variety. There will not be the slightest use in a ready and nimble wit applied to the judgement, the discrimination, the sagacity of a whole train of reasoning, and its individual steps, if you fail to set the thoughts to the best expression, and to use those cadences which are most suitable, attending to the selection and arrangement of nouns, and to the number of verbs. For there are many things which charm a hearer, wholly apart from the thought, and the treatment of facts, and a study of character which carries conviction. Music and harmony of expression are found even in those animals which herd together, much more in one social and rational, and possessing a sense of symmetry. If then you could produce what is musical, harmonious, and rhythmical, and elaborate it to the utmost nicety, cutting out here, and adding there, taking the measure of what the time, the needs of the passage, the sense of beauty require, your discourse will be truly convincing and eloquent; even as the poetry of Homer, who did not reckon this a paltry or a cheap matter, for each of his poems has a good and easy style. Take again Archilochus of Paros, for he, too, has taken great pains with this. Or take the Tragic poets in a body, or those of Comedy, or the Sophists; not even those who write of philosophy have been careless or disdainful of style: Plato and Xenophon, Aeschines and Antisthenes have been extraordinarily careful, and have used all due pains. To the great

leader of the choir of orators this merit belongs as his own; by this he would seem to surpass all others who come within the same class.

The office of style is to give our hearers a clear, clean, intelligible, rational account; and, while doing so, never to drop proper dignity, but to appear to use and combine the same elements of speech, the same symbols, to express the subject of thought, with all the rest of mankind; but to mingle with the familiar that which is strange, and also that which is novel and beautiful in the utterance; here are two marks to set before us, clearness in statement, and with clearness pleasure. If you should use Hyperbata out of season, forcibly separating words, breaking the events, and disturbing the sequence, you will displease and irritate, and your language will be ambiguous and show great gaps, even if the period be unseasonably extended, and its limits exceed all measure. You will not carry men with you, unless you are a wizard with grace and pleasure in your gift, changing and embroidering your terms.

Avoid staining the body of your discourse and breaking its continuous texture by words too archaic and unfamiliar. Again, it will not be without service to observe the injunctions of Isocrates; not to make your style rough by the juxtaposition and concurrence of vowels, so called, which do not admit of combination and therefore seem to make the texture of the language discontinuous, not passing it to the ear smoothly and without a trip, but arresting the breath and staying the flow of voice. * * *

The distinctive mark of good rhythm is clear to any one who has been accustomed to the effect of rhythmical, well turned and *rounded* sentences, the discoverers of which, those who first exhibited specimens of beautiful language, I enumerated above. If you give your mind to the matter, you will see how they discriminate and apportion their study of euphonious speech. Now they add a detail to the common, plain, dull phrase, the one in prevailing use among the mass of ordinary people, and found in every mouth. Anybody—the first person you meet—can say παίζεις, but παίζεις ἔχων presents a distinctive type of language and phraseology; there are many such redundant additions, nearly all the parts of speech, down to single letters. They even add two such parts, or even more; but with these you must take care, and observe the standard of language; for you must not introduce or appoint yourself as a law of your own making, to which to refer: the law of language does not rest upon us, but we upon the law.

[*Rhetoric of Longinus*, ch. 3.]

II

The Treatise on Sublimity and Latin Critics

A COMPARISON of the *Treatise on the Sublime* with the specimens of the later Greek critics contained in Appendix I shows a wide divergence in style, treatment, and conception. Even more striking is the contrast, if we turn back to the works of Aristotle on Rhetoric and Poetic Art. Aristotle is business-like, analytical, ready with a shrewd anecdote or a point of caustic humour; he deals with literature, much as Bacon does, as a part of the intellectual equipment of the human race, and it does not come in his way to touch upon that quality of sublimity, or elevation, which is at present before us. Plato, in his own writings, and notably in his 'Myths,' strikes a note which is, in any sense of the word, sublime; but his criticism is whimsical and intangible; he disparages poetry as it actually existed, and places the ideal poet one degree on a scale of nine, above the artisan, and two above the tyrant; he exhibits the eloquence of Pericles and Cimon as ineffectual, if not mischievous. The author of the *Treatise* venerates Plato, and copies him, but they do not meet on any common ground as critics.

Thus we cannot but be aware of a certain non-Greek character in the work; it may have been partly a sense of this which led Mommsen to write—

'The dissertation on the Sublime, written in the first period of the Empire by an unknown author, one of the finest aesthetic works preserved to us from antiquity, certainly proceeds, if not from a Jew, at any rate from a man who revered alike Homer and Moses.'

[*The Provinces*, Bk. viii. ch. 11.]

And again:—

'The gulf between that treatise on the Sublime, which ventures to place Homer's Poseidon, shaking land and sea, and Jehovah, who creates the shining sun, side by side, and the beginnings of the Talmud which belong to this epoch, marks the contrast between the Judaism of the first and that of the third century.' [Ibid.]

Assuming, for there seems to be no special reason to question it, the substantial integrity of the text in the passages to which reference is made, we observe that, if the writer had been himself a Jew, he would not have quoted the opening words of the Law incorrectly. Nor can we speak with any certainty in the absence of the work of Caecilius; many of whose illustrations are repeated in the *Treatise*, and who was, if we may believe Suidas, a Jew.

It remains to ask whether the language and thought of the *Treatise* betray the influence of the Latin basis of the great Empire under which the author lived. His latest English editor[1] has pointed out Latinisms of construction and rhythm, which we cannot usefully follow out here, but which seem undeniable. We notice also the frequent lists of words unconnected by conjunctions.

[1] See Rhys Roberts, pp. 11 and 188.

Such lists may be found in Longinus and Dionysius, but not so framed as to give the sense of intensity and fervour of which we are often aware in the *Treatise*, especially when the terms, by a device familiar in Latin Rhetoric, fall into pairs, or other combinations[1].

Coincidences of detail with the critic Quintilian (about 40–118 A.D.) have been pointed out. Such are:—

'Some are pleased with these obscurities; when they have taken them in, they are delighted with their own penetration, enjoying them as though they had discovered, not heard them.' (*Quint.* viii. 2. 21; cp. p. 12.)

'What the Greeks call fantasies we may call visions; whoever has conceived these well will be most effective in matters of feeling.' (*Quint.* vi. 2. 29; cp. p 32, &c.)

'The turning of the speech away from the judge, which is called *Apostrophe*, is wonderfully stirring.' (*Quint* ix. 2. 38; cp p. 38.)

'As though you were to attach the mask and buskins of Hercules to infants.' (*Quint.* vi. 1. 36; cp. p. 55.)

'If we are likely to have gone to hazardous lengths in expression, we must come to the rescue with certain specifics, "so to speak," and the like.' (*Quint.* viii. 3. 37; cp. p. 57.)

The treatment of the 'Figures' and of 'Composition' in Quint. ix may be compared with pp 70–2 of the *Treatise*.

These instances are drawn from Vahlen's notes. See also Vaucher, p. 85, and add:—

'Although these luminous effects appear to shine and

[1] See pp. 17, 23–4.

to a certain extent to show in relief, it would be more true to compare them to sparks glittering in the midst of smoke than to flame; they are not seen at all when the whole speech is in light, just as stars disappear in sunshine.' (*Quint.* viii. 5. 29; cp. p. 41.)

It is possible that these details may have been borrowed by both writers from the lost work of Caecilius. At any rate there is not much in common between Quintilian, the professional critic, writing with a limited educational purpose in view, though many of his judgements go deeper than this and are admirably expressed, and the exponent of the Sublime, writing for men already in public life.

If we look for the most characteristic views of the latter, for the purpose of comparing them with anything to be found in Latin authors, we may select two of a general kind, the love of civil liberty, and the sense of greatness in Nature. Others, which more immediately concern literature, may be stated as precepts:—Think great thoughts—live with great authors—form your own standard with reference to their practice—dare to look beyond your own contemporaries for applause.

The blessings of liberty, and the numbing depression of the imperial system are commonplaces in Tacitus, and are specially prominent in the *Dialogue on the Causes of the Decay of Oratory*. 'Eloquence requires motion to fan it,' that stir of free civil life, which is so forcibly described in the *Treatise*. Yet neither author is a fanatic; each is aware of the weakness which makes men praise the past at the expense of what is within

reach. Tacitus reminds us that the boasted liberty of the Republic was often turmoil and lawlessness; he allows that a dignified opportunism may be more patriotic than a pretentious death, and that examples were needed that even under bad emperors there might be great men. Both writers look beyond mere political status to the freedom which character alone gives—the emancipation from distracting desires and fears. 'All are slaves besides'; and perhaps for such it is better to be ruled than to live free. Here Cicero and Horace (the latter of whom thought and felt more earnestly on these subjects than he sometimes receives credit for doing), Persius and Juvenal, are vehemently with them in opinion.

The awe in the presence of what is great in Nature is familiar to Romans. Horace speaks of those who could look 'with no fear' on the mighty regularity of the heavenly bodies; but he makes it clear that he is not a good enough Epicurean to be one of them. He laughs at the man who likes to draw his pint of water from a great river or who cuts his mouthfuls from a great mullet; but then he is dealing with the avaricious man, and the glutton, and any stick is good enough to belabour them. Cicero's mind was impressed by the vastness of Nature and of the Universe; he felt as a poet, and in his philosophical works often makes this clear, nowhere in more detail than in the *Dream of Scipio*, a fragment of his work *On the Republic* preserved by Macrobius. We hear in it of Nile thundering down from the cliffs and deafening the dwellers around, of Ganges, of Ocean, in his different

parts, and under his different names, of the great barrier of Caucasus; all dwarfed when seen in relation to the Solar system and the Universe, yet, even so, vast and wonderful. The heavenly bodies themselves are awful, in their immensity, and in the regularity of their courses, especially in the conception of that great cycle of time of which the years then recorded by history were not a twentieth part, which was to bring the heavens back to their ancient order.

As critics, Cicero and Horace have not much in common with one another. Cicero was profoundly interested in the history and prospects of Roman oratory; Horace never mentions it, unless to express approval of the pure Latinity which it exacts. Horace was deeply concerned for the future of Roman poetry; Cicero loved poetry, especially that of his countrymen, and had much poetry in his own genius, but he does not contemplate poetical literature as a critic. In both authors, however, we have ideas which meet us also in the *Treatise*. Horace is constantly exhorting the young poets of Rome to study Greek models, and of them the greatest—his own were Homer, Pindar, Alcaeus, Sappho, Alcman—not the Alexandrians. He is himself, as Addison has well pointed out (see note on p. 31), singularly responsive to inspiration drawn from Homer. Cicero, besides giving us in the *Brutus* a series of careful and sympathetic portraits of Roman orators, reproduced in Latin the Speeches of Aeschines *against Ctesiphon* and Demosthenes *On the Crown*, as an orator, he tells us, not as a translator, thus meeting the question, How

would these masters of language have said this or this, had they spoken in Latin? Horace, proud of his supremacy as lyric poet of Rome, assured to him by the voice of his contemporaries, yet looked to a more lasting reward in a fame which should be part of Roman history. Cicero thanks Brutus in touching terms [1] for reminding him of performances 'which will speak with a voice of their own when mine is silent, and live when I am dead.'

The most remarkable judgement in the *Treatise* is that in which the author expresses his preference for great excellence, though marred by failure, to moderate excellence, however flawless. It was hardly to be expected that Horace should proclaim the same view, and indeed it was a dangerous one to send abroad in Rome. His anxiety was to impress upon men of his generation the truth that a happy gift of verse, even if it should amount to genius, would not ensure them success without study of the grammar of the poetic art, whatever might have been the case with Greeks working upon their more plastic material; that slovenly work is bad work; and that a poem which declines from the highest, at once sinks to the lowest. Cicero, in the person of Antonius, requires perfection in an orator, since any failure is taken to come of 'stupidity.' Yet both writers would allow, we may be sure, unstinted praise to actual genius, even if it flagged palpably or spoke with a stammering tongue. Certainly Horace discusses with excellent good sense the old question of Genius

[1] *Brutus*, end.

and Art: he allows that Homer can be drowsy, though he himself chafes at every nod.

Even more remarkable than this judgement itself is the basis upon which the author of the *Treatise* rests it. Perfection is to be exacted in a statue, for that is a work of art; it is not to be found in literature, *for words are an endowment which comes from Nature.* This might seem to contradict Aristotle's view that Poetry and Painting, or Sculpture, are alike imitative arts. But Aristotle expressly distinguishes arts which, like Music (and he ranks Poetry with Music), reproduce action and character themselves from arts which, like Painting or Sculpture, imitate the features or gestures accompanying action or character; between the imitation of nature in her processes, and the imitation of nature in her effects. Burke touches on the point in the last chapter of his Essay, but is hardly explicit; Shelley, in his *Defence of Poetry*, goes nearer to it.

So far as ancient literature is concerned, the reasoning remains unique, and we cannot expect to find it anticipated in Latin. Yet Latin literature itself furnishes a practical commentary on the strange, yet essential, link between greatness and imperfection. 'It is a noticeable result,' writes Professor Sellar, 'of the vastness of the task which Roman genius sets before itself, that two such works as the didactic poem of Lucretius and the *Aeneid* of Virgil were left unfinished by their authors, and given to the world in a more or less imperfect condition by other hands.' No poem was *ever projected upon lines more likely to produce the*

'legitimate poem' which Horace desires, than was the *Aeneid*, none was more faithfully elaborated, and, after all, the great poem needs to be studied with allowances, over and above those due to failing time. Yet, if Horace had been consulted by Varius and Tucca, he would certainly have given his voice against that of the dying poet, and preserved to the world so much greatness, with its inseparable imperfections.

It is not desired to draw any conclusion from these observations, nor indeed would any be possible. Future research may have some discovery in store for us as to the *Treatise* in its complete form, or as to its authorship, and any discovery may be in the nature of a surprise. It may therefore not be wholly idle to point out certain affinities to Latin thought, to remind ourselves that Horace began his literary life by writing Greek lyrics, and to add that the professions of Greek nationality implied on p. 28 may have been understood to be merely conventional, a thin disguise which need deceive no one.

III

Passages translated from Bishop Lowth's Oxford Lectures on Hebrew Poetry

ROBERT LOWTH

Robert Lowth (1710–87), a native of Winchester, and educated in the College there, and at New College, Oxford, of which he was a Fellow (1729–50). He was Professor of Poetry at Oxford (1741–50), and from that Chair delivered in Latin the *Lectures on Hebrew Poetry* from which our extracts are translated. An argument used in this course drew on him an attack from Warburton, which he answered in a letter which has become a classic. In later life (1778–9) he published *Isaiah, a New Translation* with notes. He was Bishop successively of St. Davids (1766), Oxford (1766–7), and London (1767–87).

The extracts have been chosen solely for their literary interest, and as showing how the *Treatise on the Sublime* was constantly in the thoughts of eighteenth-century critics; also because many points relating to 'the Figures' receive illustration in them. It is possible, however, that, if the arguments and illustrations were checked by a competent Hebrew Scholar, the contents of the Lectures would even now be found of value.

OF SUBLIMITY IN DICTION

I HERE understand Sublimity in the widest sense of the word; not only the sublimity which puts forward great subjects with magnificent images and elaborate words, but that indescribable power in style which strikes the mind through and through, which stirs the feelings, which expresses ideas with clearness and

distinction, never thinking whether the words be simple or ornate, choice or vulgar: and in this I follow Longinus, the greatest authority upon Sublimity, its meaning and treatment.

Sublimity [illegible] In most c[illegible] the one h[illegible], and sharing with it its own force and weight, in a sort of friendly partnership. This does not prevent our being able to treat each separately without much inconvenience. We will therefore first look into the poetic diction of the Hebrews, in itself and as compared with prose, and ask what it has in it to deserve a name given in virtue of sublimity.

Poetry, in whatever language, has a diction peculiarly its own—vigorous, grand, sonorous, in its words full to exaggeration, in their arrangement choice and artistic, far removed from vulgar usage by its entire form and complexion, often, in the freedom which indignation gives, breaking the barriers which confine common speech. Reason speaks with a low, temperate, gentle voice; is orderly in arranging its subjects, plain in setting terms to them, distinct in their exposition; it studies first of all perspicuity, careful to leave nothing confused, obscure, involved. With the Feelings, there is not much care for all this; ideas flow together in swollen stream, they struggle within; of these the more vehement burst out as chance wills it, wherever they may; whatever has life and glow and speed they snatch up, they do not seek out. In a word, Reason uses unassisted speech, the Feelings utter the language of

poetry. Whatever be the feeling which stirs the mind, the mind goes deep down into that which stirs it and clings there, labouring to give it utterance; it is not enough to express a thing barely and as it actually is; it must express it according to its own conception, with splendour, it may be, or melancholy, or exultation, or horror. For the feelings by their own natural force are borne towards fullness of speech; they marvellously enhance and exaggerate all that is within the mind, they strive to express it with elevation, magnificence, distinction; and this they effect by two principal methods; either by illustrating the subject itself with splendid images drawn from elsewhere, or by introducing new and strange forms of speech; which have great power just because they copy, and in a manner reproduce, the actual condition of the mind at the time. Hence those Figures of which rhetorical writers make so much, attributing to Art the one thing which of all others belongs to Nature:—

For Nature forms our spirits to receive
Each bent that outward circumstance can give:
She kindles pleasure, bids resentment glow,
Or bows the soul to earth in hopeless woe;
Then, as the tide of feeling waxes strong,
She vents it through her conduit pipe, the tongue.
Horace, *A. P.*

What is true of the nature of all poetry will be at once acknowledged to hold specially good of Hebrew poetry. We have already seen how much power it has in transferring and adapting Images, and what great

brilliance, majesty, elevation it has drawn from this. Then, in diction, we have observed what power to adorn and dignify is possessed by the poetic dialect which it often employs, and also by the artistic arrangement of sentences, so closely connected with a metrical system, which is itself entirely lost. We have now to ask whether there are any other potent elements in Hebrew poetic diction, which separate it off from that of prose?

Nothing can be conceived simpler than the ordinary Hebrew language: all in it is bare, straightforward, sane, simple; the words are neither far-fetched nor carefully chosen; there is no attention to periods, not even a thought about them; the very order of words is for the most part constant and uniform, the verb comes first, then the noun which denotes the agent, the rest follow; separate phrases express separate things, the adjuncts are subjoined by themselves, the parts are never involved, and do not obstruct one another; most important of all, a single particle may carry the connexion unbroken from beginning to end, so that no struggling, or abruptness, or confusion is apparent. Thus the whole order of the writing, and the continuity of its connected parts, are such as to show an even mental condition in the writer, to reflect the image of a calm and tranquil spirit. But in Hebrew poetry the case is quite different. The spirit dashes on unchecked, having no leisure or will to attend to minute and frigid details; its conceptions are often not clothed or adorned by language, but laid open and bare; a veil

is drawn aside, so that we look straight into every condition and movement of the mind, the sudden impulse, the onward rush, the manifold turnings.

Any one who wishes to be satisfied of this will, I am sure, see it for himself, if he will only make an experiment. Let him take up the book of Job, first read through the historical preface, and then pass on to the metrical part, and carefully examine Job's first speech. I think that he will now allow that something has happened: when he came to the poetry, he felt himself carried suddenly into what is almost another language; the difference in style appeared to him greater than if he passed from Livy to Virgil, or even from Herodotus to Homer, or put down Xenophon to plunge into a chorus of Sophocles or Euripides. It is so indeed: this passage imitates a passion so vehement that no poet has ever attempted anything more burning and intense: not only are thoughts and images admirable in force, beauty, and sublimity, but the whole style and character are such, the verbal colouring so vivid, the piling up of matter so abundant, the sentences so close and continuous in their multitude, the whole fabric so spirited and passionate, that Poetry herself has nothing more poetical. Most of these points are so clear that they cannot possibly escape a diligent reader; others, especially those relating to form and structure, lie somewhat deeper; in some cases, what is powerful in effect, and easy to take in mentally, is hard to explain: when you look into it, it seems clear: handle it, and it is found to vanish. As it is much to our point, I shall

endeavour, with your indulgence, to put before you a specimen of these beauties of style.

The reader should first notice how violently the grief of Job, long boiling within his bosom, and forcibly confined there, breaks out:—

> Let the day perish—I was to be born on it—(i.e. on which I was to be born)
> And the night (which) said, There is a man child conceived[1].

Observe the concise, abrupt structure of the first line, and the bold figure, and still more abrupt construction, in the second. Ask yourself whether so sharp a contortion of language could have been endured in any prose style, or even in verse, without underlying passion of the strongest kind to support it. Yet you will acknowledge, *I think, that the sense of the period is thoroughly clear,* so clear that, if the expression were fuller and more explicit, it would give the thought and feeling of the speaker less fitly and less distinctly. By a fortunate accident we are able to put this to the proof; for Jeremiah has a passage so like this one, being so to say its twin, that it might seem to be copied The sense is the same, and the words not very unlike; but Jeremiah has filled in the gaps in the structure, smoothing out the broken language of Job, and expanding the short distich into a pair of long lines, such as he often uses:—

> Cursed be the day wherein I was born:
> Let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed.

[1] Job iii. 3.

Cursed be the man who bringing glad tidings to my father,
Saying, A man child is born unto thee, made him very glad[1].

The result is that Jeremiah's imprecation is rather querulous than indignant; it is more gentle, quiet, plaintive, so framed as to arouse pity in a high degree, a feeling in which this Prophet is especially strong; whereas Job does not stir pity, but inspires terror.

Let us move on a little. We pass over obvious points: the closely set thoughts, following in but slight connexion, and bursting with impetuosity and force from a burning breast; the grand and magnificent words rolled along in a headlong stream of indignant eloquence; we have four, in a space of twice as many short lines, only used, it would seem, in poetry; at least, two of them constantly occur in poetry, and never out of it, the others are still more unfamiliar. Not to dwell on all this, what is the meaning of the fullness of language, which takes the place of the former curtness, in this:—

That night—let darkness have it.

In this, again, we have an indication of strong feeling and mental disturbance. No doubt he first conceived the sentence thus:

Let that night be darkness.

But, when he had started, he caught up his own words, and the result is increased spirit and intensity.

. . . .

[1] Jeremiah xx. 14, 15.

We return to Job—

Lo, let that night be barren![1]

He seems to set before his eyes the form and image of that night, to look into it, to point to it with his finger. 'The doors of my womb' for 'the doors of my mother's womb' (v. 10) is an ellipsis which is easily to be supplied, but which no one when tranquil and master of himself would venture. Not to take up too much of your time, I will only quote one passage towards the end of this speech:

Wherefore will he give light to him that is in misery,
And life unto the bitter in soul;
Which long for death, but it cometh not;
And would dig for it more than for hid treasures;
Which would rejoice exceedingly, and exult,
They would triumph if they could find the grave—
—To a man whose way is hid from the sight of God,
And whom God hath hedged in?
For my sighing cometh before I eat,
And my roarings are poured forth with my drink[2].

The composition of the whole passage is admirable: let us touch briefly on single points. 'Wherefore will he give light to him that is in misery?' *Who* will give? God, no doubt; whom the speaker had in mind, and failed to notice that no mention had been made of Him in what went before. He seems to speak of the miserable in general terms, but by an abrupt turn of thought he applies these to himself: 'for my sighing cometh before I eat': from which it appears that all the foregoing expressions are to be understood specially of

[1] Job. iii. 7. [2] Job iii. 20-4.

himself. He passes from singular to plural, and back from plural to singular, first introducing that grand expansion of phrase by which he expresses the desire for death, a bold and powerful passage; then he suddenly resumes and continues the original thought which he seemed to have done with. From all this it is clear, I think, that the excitement and disturbance in the speaker's mind are expressed, not only by happy boldness in thoughts and images, and the use of weighty words, but even more by the whole drift and tenor of the speech.

What I have thus far tried to point out in this noble passage, holds good, in my opinion, in a high degree of all Hebrew Poetry, regard being had to the subjects and matter; it uses a language of an active, ardent character, and one naturally adapted to mark the feelings. Hence it is full of turns of speech from which their own prose style shrinks, and which sometimes seem to have a hard and unfamiliar, even a barbarous sound; but which, as we may reasonably conjecture, have their own force and purpose, even when least patent to us. Going a step further, it will perhaps be worth our while to venture our experiments on other points of the kind, in the hope of clearing up some of them.

[*Lecture* xiv.]

OF SUBLIMITY IN DICTION (*continued*)

In order to bring out more clearly Sublimity as a characteristic of Hebrew poetry contrasted with prose, I sent the reader to the Book of Job, where he may

easily observe the great difference, both in matter and also in diction, between the historical preface, and the metrical sequel. As the comparison may seem unfairly drawn upon a passage where, even if both parts had been written in metre or both in plain prose, the difference in subject-matter would have required a great difference in style, let us now make the experiment on another place, taking one where the same subject-matter is treated in prose, and also with a poetical setting. We shall find an excellent example in the Book of Deuteronomy, where Moses takes the two parts of orator and poet. First, in a most impressive speech, he exhorts the Israelites to observe the Covenant, setting before them the richest rewards, and deters them from breaking it by threats of the greatest penalties; then, that this may sink deep and remain fixed within their hearts, he sets out the same theme, by the express command of God, in a poem which is essentially sublime. In both passages we perceive every quality of force, grandeur, magnificence, possessed by the Hebrew language in either style, and its great power in both; and we see meanwhile the points of difference between the two, in thoughts, images, arrangement of subjects, form and colouring of the diction. Any one who may wish to look closely into the nature and genius of poetical expression in Hebrew will do well to compare these passages carefully with one another, and see the great difference between the one style, grand, no doubt, and vehement, and full, but also orderly, flowing, consecutive, and, for all its rush and vehemence, moving evenly on, and poetry, with its

sharp, swift, thrilling sentences, elevated in thought, glowing in words, novel in their arrangement, varied in structure, as the spirit of the prophet once and again hurries itself from this to that, and never rests stationary. Most of these points are such that it is much easier for a careful reader to note them from his own observation, than it is to explain them intelligently, or to understand them as explained. Certain points, however, call for notice in this noble poem, which belong to a class common in Hebrew poetry, yet by their great force, and sometimes by their extreme difficulty, demand more careful examination.

A first point which I wish to notice as of general application, taking my example from this passage, is the frequent change of persons; I mean in addresses, for of the introduction of various speakers I have already spoken sufficiently. Near the beginning of the poem, Moses sets out the absolute truth and justice observed in all the counsels and doings of God; and he takes the opportunity to inveigh suddenly against the criminal perfidy of the ungrateful People; first, as though they were not present:—

> They have corrupted themselves, they are not his children, it is their blemish[1].

Then he addresses them directly:

> A perverse and crooked generation.
> Do ye thus requite the Lord,
> O foolish people and unwise?
> Is not he thy father, that hath bought thee?
> He hath made thee and established thee.

[1] Deut. xxxii. 5.

Then, as his burning indignation abates a little, and he looks more deeply into the matter, he sets out in most beautiful terms the indulgence of God and his more than fatherly affection towards the Israelites, witnessed continually since the day when he chose them to be his own people, and all this in language turned away from the Israelites; then he marvellously emphasizes the dullness and stupidity of the ungrateful and impious people, or rather sheep. Now mark with what a burst the indignation of the prophet once again breaks forth:—

> But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked:
> Thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art become sleek;
> Then he forsook God which made him,
> And lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation [1].

In one brief sentence the speech is *suddenly* directed to the Israelites, and then turned *from them* afresh, with admirable effect; it is fervid, forcible, pointed, charged with hate and indignation. Worthy to be compared with this passage of Moses is Virgil's apostrophe, less burning but most ingenious, where he taunts the traitor with his crime, and at the same time clears the king of the odium of cruelty:

'Not far off Mettus had already been torn asunder by the chariots driven apart—ah, *false* Alban, were you but a keeper of your word! [2]'

[*Lecture* xv.]

[1] Deut. xxxii. 15 [2] *Aen.* viii. 642.

Additional Note on Paraphones (p. 53).

'Deux autres musicistes grecs postérieurs à l'ère chrétienne font mention d'une catégorie intermédiaire d'accords: les *paraphones*, expression qu'on pourrait rendre en français par *demi-consonances*. Thrasylle, contemporain de Néron, donne la qualification de *paraphones* aux intervalles de quinte et de quarte. L'écrivain le plus récent, Gaudence, définit les paraphones: "sons [accouplés] tenant le milieu entre les symphonies et les diaphonies, et qui, dans le jeu hétérophone des instruments, paraîssent consonants". Tels sont, ajoute-t-il, l'accord de triton, formé de la parhypate et de la paramèse, ainsi que la tierce majeure composée de la diatonique et de la paramèse.' (Gevaert et Vollgraff, *Problèmes musicaux d'Aristote*, Gand, 1899.)

The date of Gaudentius is uncertain. No explanation is quite satisfactory which does not imply the resolution of one sound into several, since periphrasis is essentially the use of many words in place of one or few. It may therefore be of interest to add an explanation quoted from the Abbé Arnaud (1721–84):—

'Je suis convaincu que, par les sons paraphones, Denys Longin n'entend autre chose que ces notes que nous appelons de goût et de passage, et qui, loin de dénaturer la subsistance du chant, l'enrichissent et l'ornent infiniment. De même que les *variations* musicales, qui portent dans un air un beaucoup plus grand nombre de sons, sans en altérer le sens et le thème, lui prêtent plus d'agrément et de vie, ainsi la *périphrase*, qui consiste à expliquer une chose par un certain nombre de mots au lieu de la désigner par son terme propre, donne souvent à cette chose plus d'énergie et de grâce. Dès lors il n'y a plus d'obscurité; la comparaison devient on ne peut pas plus juste.'

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